



Ontario

Report of  
The Royal Commission on  
Violence in the  
Communications Industry

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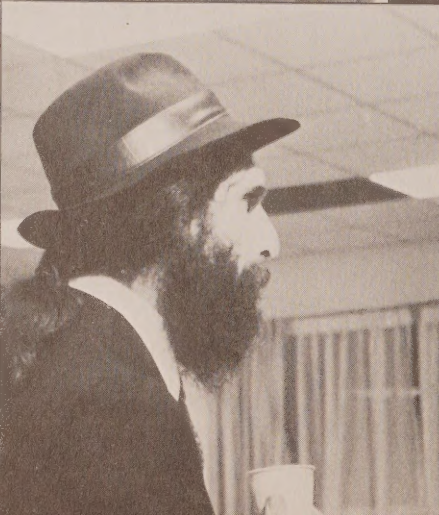
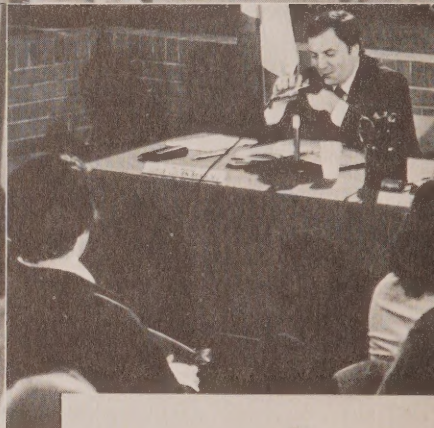
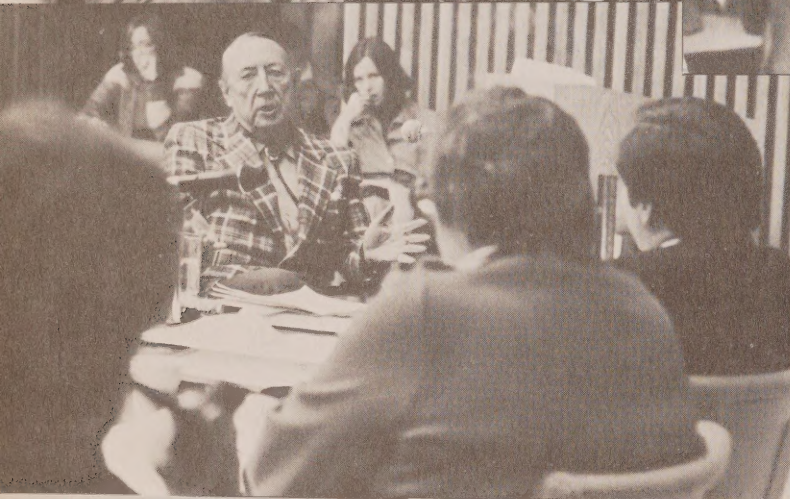
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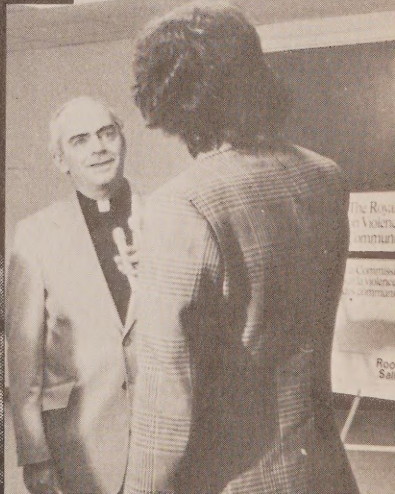
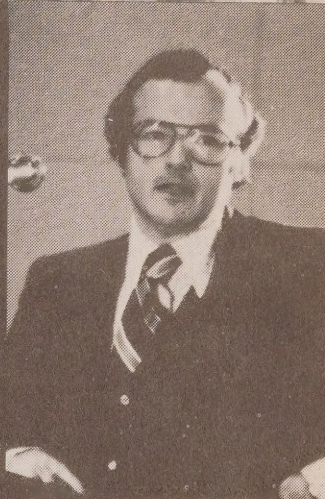
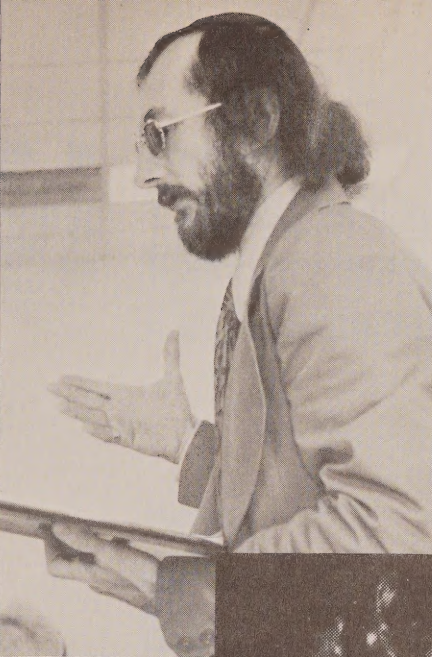
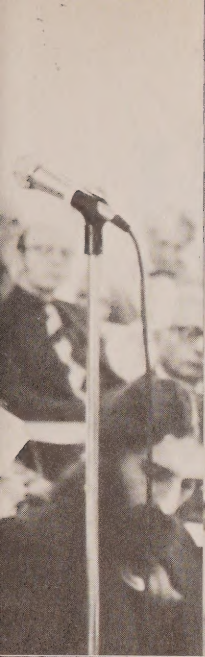
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**Approaches,  
Conclusions  
and  
Recommendations**

















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# Report of The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry

Volume

# 1

## Approaches, Conclusions and Recommendations



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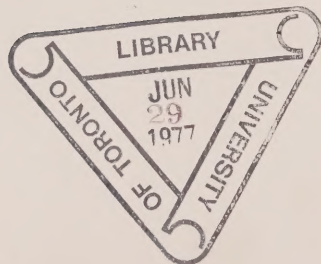
The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry was established by Order in Council in May 1976 and published an Interim Report in January 1976. It held hearings throughout the Province of Ontario from October 1975 to May 1976.

A selection of public briefs, reports of foreign consultations and the conclusions and recommendations of The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry are published in Volume I, which is available in French and in English.

The Commission's Bibliography comprises Volume II.

Twenty-eight independent studies of the media were undertaken for The Commission and are contained in Volumes III to VII.

*Ce volume est publié également en français.*



**To Her Honour,  
The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario**

May It Please Your Honour,

You approved, on May 7, 1975, Order-in-Council No. 1299, pursuant to the provisions of The Public Inquiries Act (1971), appointing us to report upon matters relating to the possible harm to the public interest of the increasing exploitation of violence in the communications industry, and empowering and instructing the Commission:

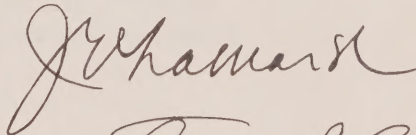
1. to study the effects on society of the increasing exhibition of violence in the communications industry;
2. to determine if there is any connection or a cause and effect relationship between this phenomenon and the incidence of violent crime in society;
3. to hold public hearings to enable groups and organizations, individual citizens and representatives of the industry to make known their views on the subject;
4. to make appropriate recommendations, if warranted, on any measures that should be taken by the Government of Ontario, by other levels of Government, by the general public and by the industry.

We have studied the effects on society of the increasing exhibition of violence in the communications industry.

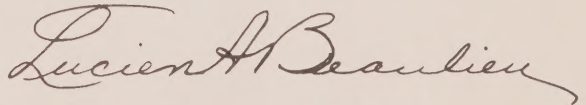
We have determined a connection between this phenomenon and the incidence of violent crime in society. We have held public hearings to enable groups and organizations, individual citizens and representatives of the industry to make known their views on the subject.

We now respectfully submit to Your Honour the appropriate recommendations.

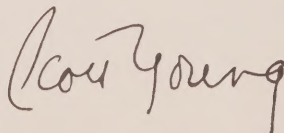
J. V. LaMarsh,  
*Chairman*



Lucien A. Beaulieu  
*Commissioner*



Scott A. Young  
*Commissioner*







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Leasing our eyes and ears and nerves to commercial interests is like handing over the common speech to a private corporation, or like giving the earth's atmosphere to a company as a monopoly.

—*Marshall McLuhan*  
Understanding Media, p. 57  
McGraw-Hill Book Company,  
New York, 1966

Controlling violence means . . . raising the level of society. The people who produce and sell socially irresponsible programs are thinking of their viewers as a mob rather than a community. The mob is the lowest form of community; it is a completely homogeneous society organized for hatred, and will not remain a mob long unless it can find someone to beat up, or . . . something to smash.

—*Northrop Frye, Commissioner*  
Symposium on Television Violence,  
Canadian Radio-Television and  
Telecommunications Commission  
Kingston,  
August, 1975.



# **The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry**

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L. A. Beaulieu, *Commissioner*

Scott A. Young, *Commissioner*

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Kathleen D'Souza\*\*

Linda Gaylard

Penny Nettlefold

Kelvin Pearcey

\* 1975

\*\*1976



## Order-in-Council

*Copy of an Order-in-Council approved by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, dated the 7th day of May, A.D. 1975.*

Upon the recommendation of the Honourable the Premier, the Committee in Council advise that pursuant to the provisions of The Public Inquiries Act, 1971, S.O. 1971, Chapter 49, a Commission be issued appointing

The Honourable Julia Verlyn LaMarsh, P.C., Q.C., LL.D.,  
Judge Lucien Arthur Beaulieu, and  
Scott Alexander Young,

and naming the said Julia Verlyn LaMarsh as Chairman thereof, to study the possible harm to the public interest of the increasing exploitation of violence in the communications industry; and that the Commission be empowered and instructed:

1. to study the effects on society of the increasing exhibition of violence in the communications industry;
2. to determine if there is any connection or a cause and effect relationship between this phenomenon and the incidence of violent crime in society;
3. to hold public hearings to enable groups and organizations, individual citizens and representatives of the industry to make known their views on the subject;
4. to make appropriate recommendations, if warranted, on any measures that should be taken by the Government of Ontario, by other levels of Government, by the general public and by the industry.

The Committee further advise that pursuant to the said Public Inquiries Act, the said Commissioners shall have the power of summoning any person and requiring such person to give evidence on oath and to produce such documents and things as the Commissioners deem requisite for the full investigation of the matters to be examined.

And the Committee further advise that all Government ministries, boards, agencies and committees shall assist, to the fullest extent, the said Commissioners who, in order to carry out their duties and functions, shall have the power and authority to engage such staff, secretarial and otherwise, and technical advisers as they deem proper, at rates of remuneration and reimbursement to be approved by the Management Board of Cabinet.

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Chronology of Research, Studies and Policies  
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#### 3 Violence in Television, Films and News

A Content Analysis of Entertainment Television Programming—T.M. Williams, M. Zabrack, L. Joy  
Television Crime Drama: A Mythological Interpretation—J. Taylor  
Images of Different Worlds: An Analysis of English-and-French-language Television—A.H. Caron (in French and English)  
A Content Analysis of Feature Films—J. Linton and G. Jowett  
Content Analysis of the News Media: Newspapers and Television—D. Gordon and B. Singer  
Content Analysis of the News Media: Radio—D. Gordon and L. Ibson

#### 4 Violence in Print and Music

The Control of Mass Entertainment Media in Canada, the United States and Great Britain: Historical Surveys—G. Jowett, P. Reath and M. Schouten  
Speaking the Unspeakable: Violence in the Literature of Our Time—R. Fulford  
Violence in Literature for Children and Young Adults—Claire England  
Magazines and Violence—E. Beattie  
Violence and Popular Music—P. Goddard

### 5 Learning from the Media

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Replications of Media Violence—P. Stanley and B. Riera  
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Violence, the Media and Mental Disorder—J. Renner  
Institutionalized Populations' Views on Violence and the Media—J. Renner  
Viewers' Perceptions of Selected Television Programs—E. Tate

### 7 The Media Industries: From Here to Where?

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An Analysis of Some News-flow Patterns and Influences in Ontario—A.M. Osler  
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## **The Commission's Definitions of Violence**

### **The Nature of Violence**

Violence is action which intrudes painfully or harmfully into the physical, psychological or social well-being of persons or groups.

Violence or its effect may range from trivial to catastrophic.

Violence may be obvious or subtle.

It may arise naturally or by human design.

Violence may take place against persons or against property.

It may be justified or unjustified, or justified by some standards and not by others.

It may be real or symbolic.

Violence may be sudden or gradual.

### **The Nature of Media Violence**

Violence depicted in film, television, sound, print or live performance is not necessarily the same as violence in real life

Things not violent in reality may be violent in their portrayal.

Violence presented in the media may reach large numbers of people, whereas real violence may not.

The media may use many artificial devices to lessen or to amplify its emotional and social effects.

Violence depicted may do harm the original violence may not have done—or it may have no impact at all.





# The Commission Report

## Chapter One

# The Approaches

The ideal Royal Commission would be one set up to settle once and for all the matter of whether the sun rises in the east, or what you get when you add two and two. The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry must be close to the other end of the scale. Television, newspapers, films, books, magazines, live theatre, comic books, concerts, recorded music, radio – all offer violence as part of their normal messages. But then come the questions. Do they give us too much violence? How much *is* too much? What harm is there, if any, even in too much violence? If it can be proven that excessive depiction of violence by the communications industry causes damage to society by providing models or an aura of acceptability for criminal or anti-social acts, what should be done about it? And what weight should be given to the fact that a great deal of Canadian media violence is imported, constituting, in effect, the imposition of an alien culture on Canadians?

None of these questions yields an unequivocal answer. At least one – the matter of how some media, especially television and films, inject us with such massive doses of U.S. culture that our own is endangered – is beyond the direct terms of reference of the Commission. It became part of almost every study nevertheless, constantly introduced into testimony and opinion by scientist and citizen alike as an integral part of the problem.

Frankly, it was not clear at the beginning that the Commission was being asked to deal with the intellectual environment of millions of Canadians – from the very young to the very old, but mostly in between – and not just with violence as depicted in the media. This intellectual environment is made up of the interconnected products of a billion-dollar communications industry where, even when the motives may be the highest, almost all major decisions are ultimately commercial ones, with the public good appearing, if at all, well down the priority scale, certainly below the dollar signs. Good intentions may be there. The pursuit of truth is the avowed aim of most news and public affairs print and broadcast professionals, with varying degrees of success or failure. But if the pursuit of truth in a newspaper or magazine, for instance, does not also assemble an audience attractive to advertisers, the medium

will not survive for long. Titillation, shock, information, entertainment, prurience, scare tactics, hype, sexual arousal, sadistic arousal, laughter, explicit violence, instruction (from baking a cake to constructing a bomb to laying out, perhaps unconsciously, blueprints for murder or extortion or practical jokes) are elements used in the communications industry's task of assembling an audience – in some media (newspapers, radio, television, magazines), to serve as vehicles to attract advertising dollars, and in others (books, films, records, live theatre), to attract customers for the simple purchase of the media elements involved. In all, the public good is a factor only in the narrowest sense, when some potential media content may be against the law and therefore must be avoided. Into this mix march the people in their millions, with their eyes and ears open and possessing individual or group convictions as to what, if anything, is harmful to them, and the behavioural scientists in their hundreds, attempting to measure good effects and bad effects. Perhaps it was natural that the people – the public – seemed to have the firmest ideas of what was harmful and what was not. They seemed to realize instinctively, at least to their own satisfaction, that a steady diet of violence in the so-called action programs on television, explicitly violent films, graphic details of murders and shootings and rapes and beatings in the news could not possibly make them better human beings or cause anything but harm to the ethical structure to which they aspire in their lives and those of their children. Scientists in psychology, sociology and other social disciplines are generally more cautious in that they tend to present their findings as indications rather than hard facts; but the scientific trend toward a general belief in the harmful effects of depicted violence runs in the same direction as the more simplistic judgments of the public at large. Among both scientists and laymen, there are those who oppose the prevailing currents – individuals who argue that they've been watching or reading or hearing violence all their lives without ever going out and committing rape or murder or even pushing somebody at a bus stop; and there are scientists who argue that so many factors bear on public behaviour (joblessness, economic deprivation, stress, oppression by

other non-media conditions), that to assign major blame to the media is insupportable. Keeping up a running commentary on both conditions are the masters of the media themselves. Those who publish newspapers and magazines habitually invoke their traditional roles of holding up a mirror to life in which citizens may see themselves, and a window through which the public may see the world. What they choose for their mirror-window is characteristically more violent than the true real-life mix, but they parry any suggested change for the public good with the old saw that such action would be merely shooting the messenger. Those who broadcast entertainment television or produce films make some of the same claims; they also say that people in the main get what television audience ratings and film box-office returns indicate they want – “violence sells”. Still, at least some of the expressed defensiveness of the entertainment entrepreneurs has recently been called into question by the fact that from time to time they announce, with some fanfare, that they are de-emphasizing violence in future programming. They apparently find that, with some advertising agencies counselling against commercial support for violent material, with some consumer boycotts being organized against products that advertise on violent programs, and with many other manifestations of public dismay, some retreats are the better part of valour. As this Report was being written, NBC-TV president Robert T. Howard announced that the proliferation “of program types whose plotlines heavily involve violence has become excessive” and that the trend would be halted in the 1977-78 schedule. NBC, however, is not the most violent major network in North American television. That status belongs to the Canadian private network, CTV, according to this Commission's research.

To relate all this to a Royal Commission with the task of assessing a condition in society and making recommendations that may or may not be acted upon, brings its own problems. It isn't like deciding how to split up a city to make government more efficient, or what financial support should be given to book publishers, or what is an acceptable rate of increase for hydro bills. Such matters, difficult as they may be, are to some degree arithmetical.



This Royal Commission had some traditions to follow, it is true: movie and television production codes and the pressures that brought them about, U.S. government studies of violence on television and its effects, studies of the print media in this and other countries. But no one before had been asked to study the total media environment. This meant it could be no matter of tut-tutting at individual headlines, counting the murders per hour on television, or whatever. No serious person actually defends violence, or says it is good, so that wasn't a problem – although it was necessary to establish the line between aggression and violence, and that some forms of aggression are not necessarily bad and might sometimes work to the public or individual good in business, science, and other fields.

Thus narrowed almost imperceptibly, the task was to look at the whole human wash of the Canadian communications industry (with its deep penetration from the U.S.) and decide on the degree to which the existing climate of violence in the media, the public's popular intellectual environment, is perceived by the public and by scientific analysis to be harmful to society; and what might be done about it, keeping firmly in mind that the overwhelming majority in our society feels that censorship – having bureaucrats or politicians decide what people can or cannot see, read or experience – is an evil greater than almost any other. The principle followed in appointing this Royal Commission was that three citizens of vastly different backgrounds, habits, biases and points of view might arrive at a consensus of public and scientific attitudes and, without necessarily condemning the whole media structure or its motives, might see ways in which some of the worst perceived excesses could be isolated for possible future action by industry, government or the public. In this sense, the Royal Commission must hope to find enough open-mindedness in the media industries that they will study the findings without undue defensiveness and consider giving increased emphasis to what is positive and socially valuable and decreased emphasis to what the consensus says is harmful to the quality of Canadian life. The big-stick approach that might be a matter of course in some countries is neither possible nor desirable in a

country with Canada's strong democratic traditions, including freedom of expression; but the other side of that coin is the expectation of corporate responsibility when the issue is demonstrably the public good. So persuasion was always the first priority in forming the Commission's recommendations and suggesting how they might be carried out.

The course followed by the Commission was simple and direct. The first task was to become familiar with all previous research on the subject. This led back more than 50 years to the earliest attempts to control the worst excesses of films and radio (the old terms of opprobrium being uncannily similar to those now used for television and contemporary films). But most major research on specific effects of media depictions of violence dates from the 1950s and the 1960s, through to the present. Although other countries faced the same problems, the United States, as principal producer of violent content in films and television for international distribution, has been the focal point for most research: a mass involving nearly 4,000 titles. The analysis of this research identified some shortcomings in applying it to Canada. As a result, the Commission arranged its own 28-project research program to relate existing research findings to Canada and to detail unique features of the specific media diet to which Canadians are exposed. The third element was to find out what people in Ontario thought of their own media diet. This was accomplished by inviting public groups and individuals as well as the communications industries to participate in a series of 61 public hearings in communities large and small across the province. In about 700 written briefs and hundreds more oral presentations, these attitudes were put on the record. Some of the more comprehensive and representative briefs are reprinted in full or part later in this volume. Others are quoted briefly in Chapter 3 of this Report. Details of the approaches and findings of the Commission's research and public participation programs follow.



## Chapter Two

# The Research

The enormous importance of present-day mass media in Canadian life may be indicated by some simple measurements:

- More than 96 per cent of Canadian homes have television sets, and the average viewer spends almost 24 hours a week watching programs originating from 102 Canadian television stations. There are 723 more repeater stations for a total of 825 Canadian outlets; about 47 per cent of Canadians are within reach of one or more American television stations.
- About 75 per cent of Canadian homes (84 per cent in Ontario) receive at least one newspaper daily of the 114 Canadian dailies and 1,013 weekly community newspapers.
- In an average year, Canadians spend about \$100 million on records.
- About 24 million comic books are sold in Canada each year, plus more millions books and magazines of all kinds.
- Movie-goers in Canada (mostly under 35 years of age) spend about \$200 million a year at the box office.
- There are more than 15 million radios in Canada, tuned for many hours a day to Canada's 407 AM and 174 FM stations.

All these elements combine to present the images of "reality" that many Canadians accept as a fairly accurate depiction of the world in which they live. There has been a decline in the influence of previously powerful institutions – church, school and family. The communications industry has taken over at least part of those functions, playing a powerful role in shaping values, attitudes, behaviour and lifestyles. This has the connotation of an immense responsibility. The specific ways in which the communications industry is meeting this responsibility (or not meeting it) respond, in greater or less degree, to scientific analysis. Trends already have been indicated and rarely does anyone who has studied these trends conclude that the current media environment and its indications for the future add up to a total that society can accept.

Still, what is the media environment? A research



program to define its perimeters in terms of this Royal Commission became an intellectual strategy pitted against the landscape of the Commission's terms of reference, the ground already covered by existing research, and the strengths and limitations of research methodologies in the social sciences. Such a program was bound to confirm some general impressions already accepted, but also came up with striking new information and possible alternatives.

Some findings of the Commission's research program are startling in isolation:

- For instance, a child who habitually watches television alone in his room may be more inclined than others to admire criminals and even aspire to be one.
- Or, on a grander scale, the largely non-violent *téléromans* (something between soap operas and situation comedies) on French-language television in Quebec far out-draw, on a per-capita basis, any Canadian-produced dramas in the English language. This leads to the question: why don't we do this also in English to supplant imported material?
- Or, while government financial support for CBC television goes up year by year, its actual impact on Canadians continues to fall with the proliferation of cable television. Canada leads the world in use of cable television. One result is to fragment Canadian audiences and contribute to a steady increase in Canadian viewing of U.S. programming. When the cost of funding the CBC at the present rate of increase is projected 10 years ahead, one study postulates that the Canadian public will pay a numbing \$2 billion a year for the CBC by 1988. This is for a service that, through public indifference, is being constantly weakened in terms of its national impact – and therefore also in fulfilment of its mandate.

While the impact of the CBC alone on Canadian life is only a peripheral concern of this Commission (and, to be fair, the CBC ranks among the best of all North American networks when "best" is taken to mean least violent), one point to be made is that, if the CBC is supposed to be Canada's bulwark against foreign cultural invasion, including violence, its diminishing

audience share causes it to fail in that task. Dramatic changes in the whole structure of Canadian television broadcasting would be necessary to reverse this trend if the aim is to make Canadian television – private as well as public – truly controlled in Canada in the interests of Canadian life and culture. A plan for such changes – a new multi-channel system including all or most of the present U.S. and other imported content, but presented in a way that would afford Canadians more choice, availability and attractiveness of Canadian programs, with full national coverage but diminished dependence on Parliamentary appropriations – is suggested in one research report that has already caused major public discussion. The sheer shock value of the idea that the CBC might need \$2 billion a year from Parliament by 1988 is enough to ensure public attention for any logical alternative.

But these are only random results, and somewhat off the main line of the research program set up on the broadest possible scale to transform the Commission's mandate and objectives into an operational program of research in all popular media.

From the beginning of the Commission's work, a priority was to build a bibliography and selective library that would comprehensively cover the Commission's range of issues. This was an invaluable source of research and reference materials, and will be a permanent legacy. The bibliography is published in an accompanying volume. The library is being donated to a major university in Ontario.

As well, to advise the Commission and the Director of Research, an academic advisory panel was established in the early weeks of the Commission. The panel comprised a psychiatrist and psychologist, a senior media sociologist, a political scientist specializing in communications, and a philosopher and professor of law. Combining among them a vast multi-disciplinary background, the group met regularly across a period of about 10 weeks in 1975. It had wide-ranging and sometimes combative discussions on the strengths, weaknesses and gaps in existing literature, and how the issues surrounding media violence might be disentangled for operational research purposes and policy impact.

In addition to the academic advisory panel, professional and scholarly specialists in communications and communications effects were contacted across Canada and in the United States and Europe. This served to put the Commission in close touch with other ongoing communications research reflecting the concern of other nations about the impact of the media environment.

In laying out the research program, a series of critical research decisions had to be made on methods and scope. These concerned the following:

### **1. Longitudinal Studies**

Longitudinal studies are those that take place across a period of time and attempt to measure the effects of things across time. For example, in attempting to test for cumulative effects, one might run tests on the population at time zero, one year later, two years later, and so on.

Although the Commission's concerns certainly include cumulative effects, the available time frame did not permit longitudinal studies to be undertaken. This meant that an important category of methodology was unavailable and research designs had to use surrogate approaches to develop evidence of cumulative or long-range effects.

### **2. Commissioned Studies**

The Royal Commission faced a management choice: to commission research studies outside the Commission, or attempt to assemble staff and accomplish some or all studies "in house". The Commission opted for the former approach. The advantages are that much major research capacity, available in universities or consulting firms, would be unavailable to the Commission on an employment basis. Commissioning studies avoided duplication in terms of facilities, and so on, that would be required. The research also could be more geographically diversified, desirable from several standpoints, including the support it gave the ongoing development of communications research capacity at Canadian universities. The commissioned study approach contrasts with procedure followed by the U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on

Television and Social Behavior, the major U.S. research of the early 1970s. Rather than being based on an overall program design, the Surgeon General's research studies were in response to funding proposals submitted by academic research teams. This caused some diminution of overall cohesion.

### **3. Duplication of Previous Work**

It seemed undesirable to duplicate previous studies where there was reason to believe that similar results would be achieved in Canada – for instance, in studies seeking a correlation between the viewing of media violence and subsequent displayed aggression. Hundreds of such studies had been undertaken in the United States and abroad, and some in Canada as well. If anything, there was an excessive preoccupation with this category of effect, to the detriment of studies looking at other important possible effects of media violence.

On the other hand, it was important to develop Canadian data in areas where results, especially from the United States, might not be applicable. There were important comparisons to be sought between Canadian and American television programming in both entertainment and news. U.S. cities have significantly higher levels of violent crimes than comparable urban centres in Canada, so it could not be assumed that perceptions of violence that could be media-related were similar in Canada to those in the United States.

### **4. Interrelationship of Studies**

One difficulty confronted in making policy development use of existing social science research was that related pieces of research might not connect up well with each other: for example, to relate content analyses specifically to studies of audiences, or to relate either or both to certain kinds of effects studies. Accordingly, the Commission's program of research sought to interconnect studies wherever practicable. The types of interconnection are described in the chart and analytical framework of research planning presented below.

## 5. Range of Disciplines

A novel feature of the Commission's research was its attempt to build in the perspectives of all relevant disciplines. The bulk of existing research had been conducted by social psychologists and sociologists. This Commission wanted, as well, the perspectives of:

- Developmental psychology, reflecting the different interactions there can be with media at different stages of a child's emotional, cognitive and physical development.
- Education, reflecting the educational impact of the media, especially television.
- Law, in terms of legal framework, constitutional jurisdiction and legal expression of philosophical and political values related to the media and public policy.
- Political science, including the relationship of the media to collective conflict and political violence.
- Psychiatry, especially in connection with deviant behaviour and the mentally disordered.
- Anthropology, particularly with respect to symbolic roles of violence in popular culture.
- Economics, including the economic structure, imperatives and motivations of the media industries.
- Communications research, as a relatively new discipline, including such areas as content analysis.
- Engineering, in relation to future technologies of television distribution.
- Medicine and physiology, with particular reference to physiological aspects of people's reactions to media presentations.
- Literary, music and film criticism as a classical source of analysis and scholarship with respect to media content.
- Library science, in relation to major categories of literature.
- Journalism, particularly professional analysis of the content and behaviour of the news industries.

- Historical studies of the mass media.

Unfortunately, medical and physiological studies were beyond the budget of the Commission.

## 6. Canada-based Studies

Although organized and funded by the Government of Ontario, the Commission decided that its commissioned research should not be confined to Ontario. The subject of the Commission's enquiry was perceived as not narrowly confined to Ontario and, in most important dimensions, better investigated within the larger Canadian context. Also, important research capacity existed outside Ontario. Researchers and consultants to the Commission were drawn from Quebec, the Maritimes and the western provinces, in addition to Ontario. No research projects were commissioned outside Canada. It was felt important to give priority to Canadian data on media effects within Canada, and to assure that research project designs were sensitive to relevant Canadian considerations.

## 7. The Multi-media Dimension

The Commission's mandate directed it to enquire into the effects of the presentation of violence in all the various media. This is a realistic investigative approach. Virtually everyone is a multi-media consumer, with impressions intermingled rather than pigeon-holed in individual media compartments.

## 8. Violence in the News

An overwhelming proportion of previous research had examined the effects of violence in entertainment formats. Few studies had investigated the nature and effects of news-related violence. Major studies of the news industries, including analysis of content, effects, and industry organization and behaviour, were commissioned to fill these gaps.

## 9. Definition of Violence

The Commission's broad definition of violence, presented at the beginning of this volume, explicitly included non-physical forms such as psychological violence and social violence. These



are categories ignored by most other studies. There are operational difficulties in including non-physical forms of violence, but psychological and social violence exist and can be damaging.

## 10. Media Social Effects

A deficiency of previous investigations of media violence issues was over-concentration on aggression as a posited effect of exposure to media violence. While a large number of studies – an overwhelming majority – consistently found increased aggression among some members of sample populations after, or as a result of, exposure to media violence, many other possible effects, especially of a non-imitative kind, went largely unexplored. These included such possible media effects as exaggerated fears and anxieties, victimization, sensitization causing excessive defensiveness, desensitization causing tolerance of violence. Distorted images of reality and the spreading of conflict and confrontation are potentially very important constituents of public mental health. While it is obvious that media violence is not turning society at large into violent criminals (although it may have that effect on some), our individual and social mental health may still be affected in subtle and possibly negative ways.

## 11. The Pro-social Standard of Comparison

It was also determined to investigate the pro-social possibilities of media content, specifically as the relevant standard of comparison with the anti-social effects of media violence. There was accumulating evidence of impressive positive possibilities that were being largely unused. The pro-social potential, rather than the absence of negative effects, seems the relevant standard against which to measure media content.

## 12. Future Technologies

The mass media – and especially television – are rapidly evolving in new technological directions. A policy approach directed only to the existing system could become obsolescent as rapidly as the system itself. Thus the Commission's research examined developing technology as well as the existing system.

These matters decided, the Director of Research

prepared a detailed Research Program Specifications and Model.

First, a detailed systems analytical framework was set up for media violence issues and commissioned research. This comprised 18 categories of data (represented by box diagrams in the following chart), interconnected by direct linkages and feedback loops.

It included the following:

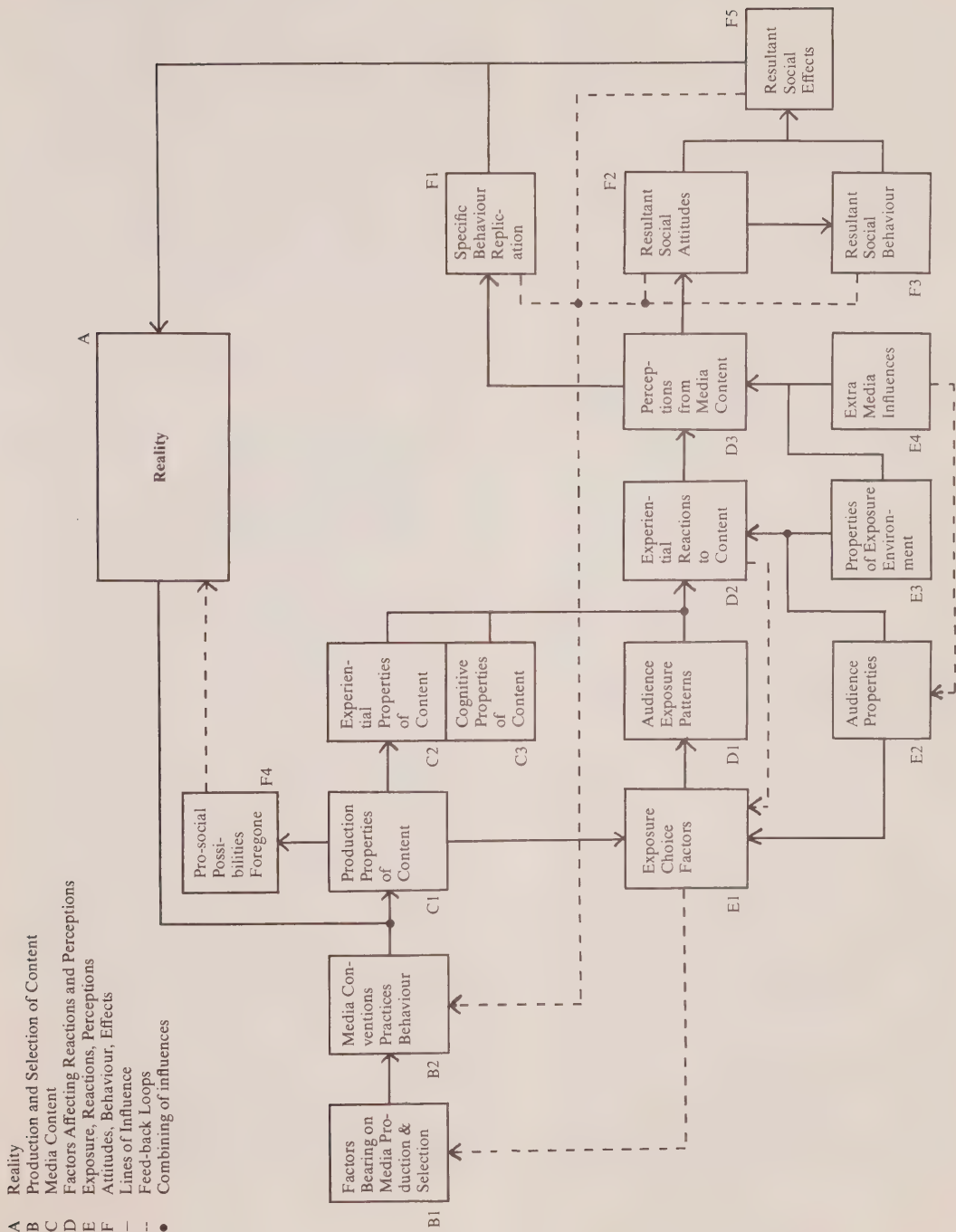
- a. Reality
- b. Industry production and selection of content
- c. Media content analysis
- d. Factors affecting reactions and perceptions
- e. Audience exposure, reactions and perceptions
- f. Resultant attitudes, behaviour and effects.

The Research Model, summarized in the accompanying chart, describes a framework for connecting the various elements and influences: from factors and imperatives operating on the media industries, to specific media conventions, practices and behaviour reflected in content. The latter, in turn, affect audience choices that, combined with audience exposure patterns, lead to patterns of reactions, perceptions and effects. Attributes such as individual personality, as well as influences outside the media, can and do affect outcomes as well. The patterns of attitudes and behaviour that may result in turn become part of personal and social reality.

This system was then separated into a draft series of research projects. The aim was to develop data and conclusions in key areas where there were gaps in existing research. Then the draft specifications attempted to identify key linkages between research projects: to use, where possible, common content samples or data bases, similar scales in related projects, and achieve co-ordination among projects with analytical commonalities.

The Research Program Specifications also listed possible media violence effects in 16 general categories:

- a. Violence-related expectations
- b. Aggression
- c. Replication of media models and criminal techniques
- d. Fear and anxiety
- e. Victimization
- f. Sensitization and defensiveness



- g. Desensitization and tolerance
- h. Political violence
- i. Images of reality
- j. Entertainment
- k. Drive reduction and emotional release
- l. Spread of conflict and confrontation
- m. Agenda-setting (the media telling the public what is important)
- n. Dissemination of information
- o. Media violence and sports
- p. Miscellaneous.

The Research Model and Specifications, after receiving approval in principle by the Commission, were submitted for review at three research seminars. One, in Montreal, assembled a multidisciplinary group of professional experts from Quebec, Ontario and the Atlantic provinces. Another, in Toronto, comprised a similar group from universities in Ontario. A Vancouver seminar included academic specialists from several universities in western Canada. In addition, a distinguished Canadian-born social psychologist and communications researcher, now at a leading university in the United States, participated in the review in the course of a visit to Canada. A list of participants will be found at the end of this chapter.

Because the Royal Commission's work was the first major study of mass media content undertaken in Canada, its commissioned research was designed to make a contribution, perhaps major, to the general field of communications research in Canada. To this end, the research program built in four specific features.

Each research study was designed to ask questions the relevance of which would be widely understood, and which could have a potential impact on policy, whether at the individual level, within the media industries, or on government action.

Second, to facilitate the widest possible public dissemination of results, research reports were to be individually released to the press as they were ready, rather than being held for the publication of the Commission's final Report.

Third, the Commission undertook to publish the research studies in collected permanent form as supporting studies to the Commission's final

Report, to assure the widest national and international availability of the Commission's work.

Finally, to encourage further research in these areas, arrangements were made to place the results of the commissioned research in the public domain upon completion of the Commission's work. It is hoped that this will facilitate the widest possible use of these materials.

Arising from these processes and decisions, 28 independent research projects were commissioned. To achieve co-ordination among projects where analytically sensible and practical, given a geographic dispersion of project execution, coordination meetings were held in the design stages.

The research projects, with summaries of their findings, were:

### 1. A Content Analysis of Entertainment Television Programming

*Tannis MacBeth Williams, Merle L. Zabrack, Lesley A. Joy, University of British Columbia.*

This project systematically analyzes a sample of entertainment television programming, broadly representative of that available on Canadian and American networks and independent stations in Ontario. It goes further than previous content analyses by using a wider definition of violence, by analyzing a wider variety of factors such as character types, relationships of characters, settings, weapons, et cetera and by including categories of programs, such as documentaries, that had been excluded from previous work of this kind. News content is analyzed in separate projects described below.

The study finds, across program categories, and especially in crime programs, that aggression is more often incidental than central to the plot. In other words, televised aggression is often "gratuitous". The physical consequences of violence are seldom shown and attacking directly is practically the only means used to achieve a goal. Conciliation, constructive resolution and arbitration are rarely portrayed as ways of resolving conflicts. Characters are most often either punished by death or not punished at all. There are twice as many male as female leading characters; sex stereotyping is common. Situation



comedies, crime programs and animated programs rank highest on most measures related to conflict, aggression and abuse. CBC programs, when compared with those taped on all other networks, have fewer aggressive episodes.

Overall, crime programs are more complex than those in other categories. Production technique, global messages, time of day, settings and types of characters presented vary more than in other program categories. This suggests that one reason for their popularity may be that they are more interesting dramatically. The disturbing implication is that gratuitous violence is made attractive to the audience.

## **2. Television Crime Drama: A Mythological Interpretation**

*James Taylor, Université de Montréal.*

This study uses structuralist techniques to examine and reveal common cultural patterns present in crime dramas. It finds that crime drama can convey various meanings to the viewers, including messages about role behaviour, basic social mores and political structures.

The deep structural equivalent of television violence is violation of social norms, which can be classified according to the object of violation and the context within which it occurs. Themes of violation serve to link modern crime drama to older forms of mythological expression, and are a clue to preoccupations within a given society. In general, television programs reflect deep ambivalences and contradictions about important moral structures within a society.

The modern crime drama is a slick, highly stylized, imitative, and therefore, economical product. However, it exploits only the surface potential of the crime drama form. Excising overt displays of violence is not a feasible means of "cleaning up" the genre; what is needed is artistic respect for and full use of the genre as a genre.

## **3. Images of Different Worlds: An Analysis of English- and French- Language Television**

*André Caron, Université de Montréal.*

The first part of this study compares the four television markets of Montreal, Ottawa – Hull,

Sudbury – Timmins – North Bay and Toronto. It describes how economic and linguistic variables play an important role in explaining market differences in available television fare and viewer preferences.

In the Montreal market, major segments of the population have access to and choose to watch locally produced French-language material. American productions have only a moderate appeal. Networks that reach the largest English-language audiences attract viewers with a significantly greater proportion of American programs and specifically crime drama. The CTV network broadcasts more crime drama than any other major network in North America. This can mean that for network reasons, crime drama is being shown in markets where comedy and variety programs actually are more popular with viewers, such as Toronto, Ottawa – Hull, and Sudbury – Timmins – North Bay.

The second part of the study looks at a number of episodes from seven leading *Québécois* television serials known as *téléromans*. Largely free of violence, these confirm the societal values and aspirations of Quebec's middle class. Although many problems of daily reality are either exaggerated or ignored here, they are all the same a much truer depiction of one society than the exotic, fast-paced stylized crime drama presentations or situation comedies from the United States.

## **4. A Content Analysis of Feature Films**

*James Linton and Garth Jowett, University of Windsor.*

This study is a detailed analysis of a stratified random sample (weighted for popularity) of 25 of the 441 feature films shown in Ontario in 1975. The study reveals a fairly high level of violence. This measure of violence, however, varies by production source, popularity level and film type: non-Canadian films are more violent than Canadian ones; not-so-popular more violent than popular; and action more violent than non-action.

The films are populated almost exclusively by human characters, most of whom are male and white. A substantial number are involved in law enforcement. The world is pictured largely as

hostile. Conflict most often takes the form of violence terminated by the use of force. Violence is often motivated by desire for physical dominance, and, if justified at all, is justified in terms of defence or revenge.

Unlike the television study, the film analysis does not bear out the notion that violence is most often gratuitous. In this medium, in most cases it is central to the plot. However, it is stylized to heighten the impressions of potency and activity, or is sanitized, with physical consequences often not shown and violence not resulting in injury or death. There is considerable variation, however, among individual films.

### **5. Content Analysis of the News Media: Newspapers and Television**

*Benjamin Singer and Donald Gordon,  
University of Western Ontario.*

This study examines and classifies a total of 12,913 news items presented during six days in the last half of May, 1976, by 10 large-circulation newspapers in Ontario, nine Ontario television stations and six American stations.

The study finds that more than 90 per cent of these news and sports items match one of 23 coding scenarios or news formulas. Across the news sample as a whole, 40 per cent of news items are violence-related, and 24 per cent deal directly with violence. Violent news stories are more likely to be selected for newspaper front pages or as the lead items in television newscasts. Sports news is not significantly violent.

There are differences in both quantity of news and amount of violent news in comparisons between newspapers and between television stations. Canadian television news is more violent than American television news, and more violent than Canadian newspapers. However, American television news tends to be more preoccupied with death, and Canadian news with non-violent property crimes.

Coding scenarios and a violence rating scale for news items were independently validated by a citizens' panel.

### **6. Content Analysis of the News Media: Radio**

*Donald R. Gordon and Lynn Ibson,  
Communications Consultants.*

A total of 1,482 news items from seven Ontario stations and two American stations are examined and classified in the same way as the newspaper and television news. A separate three-station sample of London, Ontario radio stations is also studied.

The study finds that radio news items in the sample are concerned with violence and conflict events almost 60 per cent of the time. This is in sharp contrast to the 40 per cent violent content of newspapers and television news. Sports items in the newcasts are basically non-violent. American stations dwell more on murder and physical violence, while Canadian stations mention conflict and property damage more often. The three-station sample suggest striking differences in the treatment of violence by different stations.

### **7. The Control of Mass Entertainment Media in Canada, The United States and Great Britain: Historical Surveys**

*Garth Jowett, Penny Reath and Monica Schouten,  
University of Windsor.*

This historical study examines the various attempts to control the content of mass entertainment over the last 400 years in three English-speaking countries. It finds that entertainment media are typically viewed with suspicion when they are first introduced because they are considered to be a threat to established interests or authority. However, they are difficult to control because the existing legal structure seldom takes their existence into account. The first step in the clash between government and a medium is usually an agreement by the medium to establish some internal self-regulatory organization. This is intended as a means of evading government control.

However, as the media are faced with increasing economic pressure they usually resort to content with emotional impact – sex and violence. This leads to a loss of public confidence in the ability of the media to control themselves. The whole issue of the right of the public and the entertainment

media to “freedom of expression” comes into conflict with the government’s perceived right or obligation to protect its citizenry from possibly harmful and anti-social content.

## **8. Violence in Literature for Children and Young Adults**

*Claire England, University of Toronto.*

Violence has traditionally been a staple of children’s literature, and is today. Nursery rhymes and fairy tales based on social history from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries contain many references to death, maiming and various cruelties.

Some have argued that this violence is useful in promoting a child’s psychological growth. The rough justice of Awful Warnings of fairy tale violence may captivate children who have not developed a concept of mitigating circumstances. The newer “realistic junior novels” written for older children are concerned with contemporary issues and contain themes formerly reserved for adult novels. Boys’ fiction often deals with initiation into manhood, which frequently involves violence.

The debate over the decline in reading ability is still inconclusive. However, there seems to be a shift in children’s reading habits. Children read fewer “classics” but they do read children’s adventure stories, comic books and adult novels. The most significant shift is from reading to watching television. The competition between books and television can have both positive and negative effects. Children will read books introduced to them by television, whether these books are television spin-offs or original material. However, writers of books may be encouraged to exploit violence unduly to meet the demands of an audience conditioned by television.

## **9. Speaking the Unspeakable: Violence in the Literature of Our Time**

*Robert Fulford, Saturday Night.*

Violence is not only a major feature of mass art, but also of elite literature. This is a direct reflection of two major violent events in whose shadow we live: the racial extermination practices

of internment camps in Hitler’s Germany, and the Hiroshima bomb. These have brought an overwhelming consciousness of violence into our culture. This is illustrated in this study through the works of Jerzy Kosinski, Elie Wiesel, William Burroughs, Hubert Selby Jr., and Norman Mailer.

The literary artists who produce this material are part of the mainstream culture of the period. The audience is prepared for this material by the twentieth-century transformation in the view of man, a perspective that radically alters views of the human capacity for violence.

## **10. Magazines and Violence**

*Earle Beattie, York University.*

Magazines, as part of the mass media and popular culture, reflect the commercialism of liberal democracy. Research, writing style and graphic techniques place magazines in the “middle distance” as compared to newspapers, which are “close-up” and books, which are “farther away”. The trend in magazines has been toward specialization, which attracts audiences with specific demographics (age, income and sex groupings) of interest to advertisers.

This study examines a cross-section of magazines using 12 categories of violence. Violence can take various forms from pandering exploitation to static, institutional violence. On this basis, *Reader’s Digest*, *Time* and “official detective” magazines are found to be significantly violent. The report also criticizes two *Maclean’s* magazine covers that exploit violence.

Many women’s magazines are characterized as displaying social violence, such as stereotyping and dehumanizing. Men’s magazines range from those that dehumanize and stereotype to those that exploit violent sex or violence as sexually arousing. The “police file” magazines are found to be ultra-violent with emphasis on torture, knifings, beatings, cannibalism and other brutal and sadistic crimes.

## **11. Violence and Popular Music**

*Peter Goddard, The Toronto Star.*

Violence manifests itself in contemporary music in various ways. Violence can be used as a means of

expression. Music defined as “punk rock” is a way of striking back at society’s perceived brutality. Violence can be used to shock or disturb the viewer or listener. Violence, including its depiction on album covers, can be used to sell the music. Violence can be used to make the audience conform to the group’s expectations.

Because of the nature of the music business, violence can be a by-product of the exploitation of the musician by the business, and of the rock concert audience by the promoter.

## **12. Television Violence Effects: Issues and Evidence**

*Richard Goranson, York University.*

This study is a survey of the mainstream literature on media violence and aggression. It offers its findings as answers to the major and often-asked questions about media violence: children do learn aggression by watching television violence; television violence can trigger aggressive attacks, and can also blunt emotional reactions to observed violence; limited evidence indicates that aggression can be at least partially offset by showing the consequences of violence; heavy television viewers often have an unrealistically fearful and suspicious outlook on the world.

The report places the notion of catharsis in its rightful place as a persistent and pernicious myth. It indicates that parents can influence the impact of television violence on children and concludes that approximately 10 per cent of the violence in society may be attributable to media violence.

## **13. Television and Pro-social Behaviour**

*J. Philippe Rushton, University of Toronto.*

This report is a mirror image to the one summarized above. It concludes quite clearly, from a survey of research on the pro-social effects of television, that television has the power to influence children’s behaviour in a positive and pro-social direction. Television material not designed to be specifically educational can, for example, furnish important information, teach children to be less aggressive, not to cheat, or to overcome groundless fears. The public has a choice of what they want their children to learn

from television: what they learn will depend on what they watch.

## **14. Replications of Media Violence**

*Paul Stanley and Brian Riera, A.R.A. Consultants Ltd.*

This study undertakes to determine what evidence there is to support the belief that people both learn from and imitate violence in the media.

The report concludes that juveniles may act out violent roles or experiment with techniques of violence with no malicious or criminal intent. Subcultures within society, for whom violence is acceptable behaviour, may learn new techniques, as may criminals. Those with unstable personalities may see or read of an act of violence that coincides with their own particular fantasies, or that may suggest a means of drawing attention to their needs or of expressing their anger or hostility. The study cites and analyzes a number of instances where methods may have been specifically copied from film, television or newspaper presentations.

The study also points to a relatively high probability of imitation where a distinctive weapon is used in media violence, where victims of media violence are readily identifiable in real life (members of ethnic or racial groups, et cetera) and where the location of media violence is well defined and identifiable.

## **15. Studies of Television and Youth Sports**

*Ann McCabe and Dick Moriarty, University of Windsor.*

This laboratory/field study was designed to determine the effects of anti-social and pro-social media exposure on the behaviour of 259 children and youths engaged in organized baseball, lacrosse and hockey. Participants were shown televised sports segments and their behaviour was observed 24 hours to one week afterwards. The results indicate that exposure to pro-social media increases the level of pro-social behaviour and of symbolic, but not physical or verbal, aggression. Levels of physical aggression show no consistent relationship with experimental media exposure, nor are any reliable changes recorded in percep-



tions of violence recorded following media exposure.

Questionnaire data show that those playing lacrosse and hockey watch more aggressive sports on television than those involved in baseball. They are also more likely to display attitudes associated with professional, as opposed to amateur, athletics.

The study also records a substantial increase in the televising of aggressive sports in the last 15 years.

## **16. Collective Conflict, Violence and the Media**

*Robert Jackson, Micheal Kelly and Thomas Mitchell, Carleton University.*

This study includes quantitative analysis of international data, the incidence of political violence in Ontario and Quebec, press treatment of incidents of collective conflict and violence, and an examination of seven case studies.

An analysis of cross-national data for 18 countries finds no consistent relationship between media availability and levels of collective conflict and violence. An examination of Ontario and Quebec data for recent years shows frequent occurrence of political violence, but there are significant differences in kind between the two provinces. Reports of political violence are given considerable prominence in the press as represented by *The Globe and Mail*, but there is no discernible relationship between the magnitude of incidents and the type of coverage they receive.

The strong American media penetration in Ontario is significant in providing justification for collective conflict and violence in the province. The media themselves can affect the course of political violence and collective conflict. Their reports tend to focus on the violence per se and not on the underlying issues. The study identifies problems that frequently arise in police – media relations in connection with political violence and collective conflict.

## **17. The News Media and Perceptions of Violence**

*Anthony Doob and Glenn Macdonald, University of Toronto.*

This study examines, through laboratory investi-

gations and through a survey of television viewing habits, the effects of the media on people's perceptions of violence in the world around them.

The laboratory studies indicate that respondents tend to over-estimate the incidence of violent crime, the danger in public places, the incidence of people being attacked by strangers, and the indifference of their fellow citizens. They also show that when background information is provided in specific news stories, such as authoritative explanations that the type of incident reported is extremely rare, there are dramatic changes in the subjects' perceptions. This result is not obtained, however, when the experiment examines a series of *Toronto Star* articles attempting to provide background. This may be because the articles focus as much on re-reporting dramatic, and sometimes violent, stories as on providing background.

The survey of subjects from four different areas of Metropolitan Toronto indicates that all samples tend to over-estimate the incidence of violence and the dangers associated with public places. However, the survey also indicates that distorted perceptions of violence cannot be attributed to excessive television viewing alone; rather, there is a complex set of socio-economic, geographic and cultural factors that enter into both perceptions of violence and television viewing habits. By comparison with those in low crime districts, people in high crime districts tend to watch more television, and to have higher estimates of the likelihood of violence.

## **18. Effects of Television on Children and Youth: A Developmental Approach**

*Gregory Fouts, University of Calgary.*

This study employs a developmental approach in examining the influences of media characteristics, family characteristics, parental attitudes and behaviour, children's characteristics, motives for watching television, and children's program preferences on their: (a) perceptions and distortions of reality, (b) aggressive attitudes and dispositions, (c) sensitization to violent content, and (d) victimization and rationalization.

It finds that the effects of viewing television violence are extremely complex. Based upon a

range of media-related effects such as distortion of reality, desensitization, aggressive attitudes, et cetera, that can, in turn, be divided into sub-sets of more specific effects, the study identifies a series of significant variables. Extroverted children, for example, seem to believe in physical retaliation by victims and in criminal stereotypes such as the idea that being a criminal is exciting. They are also more likely to perceive subtle forms of violence such as psychological violence. Children who enjoy watching criminal activities and people getting hurt on television are likely to be introverted. Lower marks in school correlate with belief in criminal stereotypes and with aggressive attitudes toward criminals, such as favouring capital punishment. Children in homes with more than one television set give higher estimates of crime and have positive perceptions of both real-life criminals and those on television. Children whose parents encourage them to watch television are aggressive in everyday situations.

In addition, the study finds that various postulated effects are interrelated. For example, those who are desensitized possess aggressive attitudes about criminals and are interested in guns.

The study finds that television does affect children in a variety of ways, both positive and negative. The identification of these variables can provide needed information for parents, educators and personnel in the communications industry.

### **19. Viewers' Perceptions of Selected Television Programs**

*Eugene Tate, University of Saskatchewan.*

This study consists of a survey conducted in the homes of television viewers randomly selected from the adult population of Saskatoon. Each viewer completed a series of questionnaires in connection with viewing one of four pre-recorded television programs.

This project indicates that people with less formal education generally watch more television, and that the elderly watch less television than young viewers. It also shows that the higher the viewers' socio-economic status, the less television they watch. Those who scored high on a social alienation scale tend to watch television alone, often to relieve loneliness. A relationship between

a "fortress mentality" (more locks on doors, heightened fear of strangers), and the amount of viewing time or regular viewing of crime programs, is not demonstrated.

Both alienated and authoritarian viewers selectively perceive program messages in a way that supports their own beliefs. Viewers also tend to perceive less violence than is revealed by objective content analysis. Viewers who regularly watch crime programs also watch action, adventure, adult family and sports programs. They find television viewing exciting. Regular viewers of soap operas watch television because it relaxes them and helps to pass the time. Regular viewers of adult programs watch for the same reasons and also because watching television is a habit. Viewers of both soap operas and of adult family programs said that television is a good babysitter.

One of the most common reasons given for watching television is "to know what is going on in the world". For this reason, many respondents enjoy watching the news. When asked to pick the most violent cities in North America, their replies are overwhelmingly linked to what they see on the news.

### **20. Television and the Family as Agents for Socialization**

*F.B. Rainsberry, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.*

This paper views television and the family as fundamental forces in the creative growth of the child. The family is seen as the most significant factor in the child's use of television. The parents' own behaviour may be reinforcing or contradictory of social values in relation to television use.

In order to use television most positively, producers must learn to appreciate how a child learns. There must be investment in good scripts and formats for children's programming. Ideally, cooperation among parents, educators, producers and all those who have responsibilities for the growth and development of children will produce the best use of television for the young.

## **21. Violence, the Media and Mental Disorder**

*John Renner, A.R.A. Consultants Ltd.*

This study compares media effects on normal and mentally disordered but non-institutionalized, populations. It finds that many of the adverse reactions associated with media, such as aggression, anxiety, victimization, tolerance of aggression and perceptions of a dangerous world are related to heavy use of the television medium. Both normal and mentally disordered persons appear to be affected.

Mentally disordered persons may exhibit more of the adverse reactions associated with exposure to media violence than normal persons. However, these differences are more likely to be attributable to the symptomology of mental disorder than to media use habits or preferences.

## **22. Institutionalized Populations' Views on Violence and the Media**

*John Renner, A.R.A. Consultants Ltd.*

In comparison with the previous study of non-institutionalized populations, this study finds few relationships between media use habits and the predicted reactions to media use among institutionalized populations. This suggests that both the motivations for media use and the social context within which one is exposed to the media are markedly different from those of non-institutionalized populations: for example, viewing hours are more fixed and supervised in institutions.

Different attitudes and behaviours of the institutionalized and non-institutionalized groups seem to be more closely tied to the predicted characteristics associated with these populations than to differences in either media use or preferences.

This study and the one described above attempt to define populations-at-risk with regard to television violence. The results of the two studies bear out a conclusion reached by Richard Goranson in an earlier study, that no comfort can be taken in assuming that only some part of the population is affected by television violence. Everyone belongs to the population-at-risk.

## **23. Economic Determinants of Violence in Television and Motion Pictures and the Implications of Newer Technologies**

*Hugh Edmunds and John Strick,  
University of Windsor.*

This study points out that the Canadian market tends to be dominated by products of the American film and television industries. This is due to factors such as audience taste similarities, the oligopolistic nature of the industries, restrictive market size, and economies of scale that benefit American, but not Canadian, producers.

American films account for approximately 91 per cent of all film-rental fees paid in Canada. American television programs, which cost Canadian broadcasters less than original Canadian productions, generally attract higher audiences and consequently more advertising dollars. This combination of factors makes American content far more profitable.

With respect to violent film content, there appears to be no economic relationship between production costs and revenues. In comparison with other formats, however, violent films are easier to make and usually provide a greater certainty of return for investors.

Violent television programs are costly, but they have the highest syndication value. Situation comedies are more expensive to make and more difficult to produce, partly because of a shortage of comedic writers and talent. Program-demand analysis shows that successful situation comedies can be more popular than police/detective or action/adventure programs.

Future predictions are that advancements in delivery system technologies, combined with the introduction of pay-TV will, to some degree, broaden the narrow choice now available, but will also tend to produce "more of the same".

## **24. Future Mass Media**

*Gordon Thompson, Communications Consultant.*

This report deals with developments and innovations in mass communications. It presents a series of systems ranging from those where the economic benefits are concentrated, to those where social benefits are diffused throughout society.

Systems with concentrated economic benefits are likely to be developed first, because they are attractive to commercial interests.

One such system combines pay-TV, electronic funds transfer systems and conventional television into an alarming mass-marketing system. A more positive version of pay-TV uses a video library that can be tapped by any user. This would reduce the viewers' dependency on conventional television fare, and permit customized media diets. Other important developments are the possibility of a new mass medium based on intelligent and interactive terminals, and the wider and more imaginative use of television in the community.

## 25. Alternatives for Canadian Television

*Stuart Griffiths, Communications Consultant.*

This study suggests that the present Canadian television system has failed to provide an adequate service to the Canadian community in a variety of ways, and that it should be restructured.

The proposed new broadcasting system would be made up of three components: one, publicly owned, to program the service; a second, of mixed private and public ownership, to provide the facilities for making programs and maintaining a national cable service; and a third, a freelance creative community to produce programs for the system.

The system would be responsible for "wiring up" the country. In other words, it would install and maintain cable outlets in all Canadian homes and through these outlets would be able to schedule and originate 12 channels of programming in two languages. The channels would be programmed vertically to provide specialized channels for such program categories as news and public affairs, entertainment and children's programming.

A system of this kind would concentrate cable subscriptions, advertising revenues and parliamentary appropriations for its financing. These revenues would help create a dynamic, freelance creative sector, producing international-class Canadian programs for the new system, in addition to purchasing foreign material.

## 26. An Analysis of Some News-flow Patterns and Influences in Ontario

*Andrew M. Osler, University of Windsor.*

This study examines the principal parts of the news web in Ontario, the kinds of information flowing through it and the important points of influence in the system.

The Canadian Press news cooperative is the most dominant element in the news system in Ontario. In fact, it provides the only significant inter-media connections in the province. Canadian Press places extraordinary, even undue, emphasis upon the importance of Toronto as the main provincial news hub. However, the study also shows that there is a heavy local element in both newspaper and television content and that the amount of wire service content actually used by newspapers is relatively low, considering the volume available.

The study finds thematic similarities among the media that give an illusion of sameness and imitative behaviour. It also reports that violence is a powerful element, not only in news items that deal with primarily violent events, but also in those where violence is a secondary theme. The farther the geographic distance from the news event, the less it appears in the various media. However, the more violent the news from distant places, the more likely it is to be published.

## 27. A Descriptive Study of Perceptions and Attitudes among Journalists in Ontario

*Andrew M. Osler, University of Windsor.*

This interview-based study indicates that news reporters and editors have a highly event-centred notion of news, one that defines news in terms of conflict and crisis, isolation from the social fabric, and geographic and temporal immediacy. News people tend to distance themselves from the events they cover, and to become desensitized to violence. There is a powerful tendency for them to mistrust government, particularly the intentions of governments toward the press.

The report suggests that journalists require some form of professionalization. It also suggests that news people should look more to process-



centred concepts of news than to the conventional event-centred journalism.

## **28. Constitutional Jurisdiction over Violence in the Mass Media Industries**

*Peter Hogg, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University.*

This study examines the existing division of constitutional authority with respect to the regulation of media violence issues. In general, content regulation and the industry itself are subject to exclusive federal jurisdiction. Non-content regulation of films, books, magazines, comics, newspapers, records, live theatre, concerts and movies would seem to generally fall within provincial jurisdiction.

The regulation of content in non-broadcast media could plausibly be within either federal or provincial jurisdiction, depending on its form. Constitutional jurisdictions respecting modern media are not clearly defined by the century-old British North America Act and may be influenced by future judicial decisions. A significant basis of federal jurisdiction is the criminal law power, already given expression with respect to mass media in provisions of the criminal code. There is also an important theory that legislative jurisdiction over freedom of expression does not follow the boundaries of the media, but is always federal, regardless of the vehicle of expression. There is considerable scope for policy action by both the federal and provincial levels within their respective constitutional jurisdictions.

## **A Research Overview**

How can these threads be drawn together? Given that the Commission's own research does not duplicate research done elsewhere, how does it all fit together? What conclusions does it point to? In conjunction with other evidence, what does it tell us about how our thinking on the issues should be organized?

### **Content**

The Commission's content analyses document the extent of violence in the various media. These studies confirm that violence routinely predominates in entertainment television, films, news, contemporary literature, children's books, magazines, and even some categories of popular music.

These analyses go well beyond what, to some, is documentation of the obvious. Nevertheless, it is essential to rescue the facts about media violence from the rhetoric of self-interest in which the issues have been mired almost since the debate began. Violence is a multi-media phenomenon. It is extensive, pervasive, prominent and highly repetitive. Any media exposure carries with it a high probability of exposure to violence. Violence is a staple ingredient of media productions, including news presentations.

The fact that the media are rich sources of potential effects is extensively confirmed by content analysis. Audiences are presented with role models: norms of violence; conflict resolution and socialization; images of reality that suggest what kinds of things go on in the world; things that could happen, and how; and emotional experiences that may form the bases of stress effects or desensitization.

The sources of violence in our media diets are extensively documented as well. Violence in entertainment media is overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, an imported phenomenon. By program category and by content properties, television violence is predominantly American. That confirms everyone's impressions, but what was not known is that Canadian commercial stations are more extensive purveyors of it than the major American networks themselves.

Canadians outside Quebec primarily watch American programs. Canadian-produced shows in English have smaller audiences and less violence. In Quebec, leading locally produced entertainment formats are largely non-violent but they dominate the ratings.

Similarly, film violence is overwhelmingly an American phenomenon. Not only do we import film violence directly, but American film styles and themes dominate the medium and suffuse our own feature films.

News violence is less predominantly an imported phenomenon, but it is significantly so nonetheless. Values and conventions in news selection are defined in a way that heavily emphasizes violent news. This can be especially true where the visual news media are concerned. A perverse result is that news stories from abroad are much more likely to be selected if they are violent than if they are not. This brings far more terrorism, disaster and bizarre crime into our living rooms than other information about the wider world.

Has content analysis demonstrated itself to be a powerful evaluative tool, one that can document both pro-social and anti-social performance of the media? Partly, the answer is a resounding yes. But media content is complex, not straightforward, and so is its interaction with its audience, as described below. In a number of important respects, the effects of media exposure are highly individualized phenomena, not mass ones.

In addition, there are important aspects for which content analysis tools have yet to be fully developed. A total content analysis would describe in detail how media content draws its audiences in, how it keeps them, and all that is delivered to them while they're watching (or reading, or listening). But if the detailed documentation is incomplete, the main outlines are clear.

The content properties of mass media extensively reflect industrial and commercial imperatives. This applies to news, films and magazines, some popular music, and books, to a lesser extent. But it is especially true of commercial television. The commercial television system – public television, when it gets room to breathe, has important differences – has an overweening interest in money that translates into

an extraordinarily selective interest in the people who comprise its potential audience. That in turn leads to a preoccupied search for content that will nourish that highly selective commercial interest. To the maximum extent possible, the viewer's experience is carefully managed in all dimensions – emotional, cognitive and temporal – for commercial ends.

The television consumer, despite a large apparent choice, in reality is faced with program schedules that are highly structured and carefully planned. The essence of commercial scheduling is to work on the audience's interests to give them as little *effective* choice as possible, so they will expose themselves to the messages of that station's or network's commercial sponsors. In turn, the commercial networks are only interested in feedback in terms of audience size and ratings. But, far from measuring what people want, the ratings are primarily a measure of relative success in confining audience choice to the programs of a particular network or station.

Formularization is a key weapon in the commercial content arsenal. Television crime formats are among the most highly formularized. They must be written in a teaser and four acts, with each act building to a mini-climax prior to a commercial break. The dramatic structure is thus designed around commercials. The central characters are carefully scripted across the series as a whole – to specific details of dress, lifestyle, demeanour toward other categories of persons, and dramatic function. Each episode must be faithful to the concept of the show, its dramatic *raison d'être*. All these properties are reinforced by the liberal repetition of stylized formulas for music, camera work and even for the denouement – witness the routine “chase” sequence in the final act.

One would think the crime of the week and its perpetrators would introduce some variety, but even that is superficial. As the research shows, plots in the television crime genre have critical commonalities rooted in deeply-held structural myths about social norms. Successful formats involve skilfully interweaving dramatic stylistic properties with socio-cultural metaphors about sex

and violence, “life” and “death” issues, in a very formulaized way.

Formularization has the desirable commercial attribute of product standardization. The audience believes it will get a consistent experiential product from episode to episode, even if different audiences draw different experiences from the same program or series. This is probably an important factor in audience choice on the basis of uses and gratification, discussed below. It is known from experimental aesthetics that what attracts are combinations of familiarity and novelty. The research shows that the American television crime format offers aesthetically reassuring and attractive complexity of both kinds. The formula is the familiarity and the novelty is largely superficial.

Formularization also lends itself to the factory-style production that characterizes U.S. commercial television. The program concept, style and central characters are in the nature of fixed capital assets from which returns can repeatedly be reaped, but which in time depreciate. Formulas are tried and true products that feed the commercial interest. It is also noteworthy that violence formats are easier to produce than sitcoms. They are also more exportable than humour, and therefore more lucrative in the long run.

But it should not be thought that formularization is confined to television drama. For similar commercial reasons, films have used formulas for years. Successful movies spawn replicas to squeeze the last dollar out of a successful formula.

Films and books for children and adults also rely on the same underlying structures, standard metaphors about sex and violence.

Even news is extensively formulaized, as the research has shown, through selection values and presentational styles. A myriad of distinctive happenings is daily packaged for us into a small set of news recipes. The formula brings us familiarity. The variety can become superficial. People who should be inconsequential to Ontarians or Canadians, such as Patty Hearst or Gary Gilmore, come to dominate our news media.

An important part of the aesthetics of contemporary North American television drama, especially in the crime category, is its apparent

realism. American crime programs are so persuasively realistic that they are routinely confused with reality. People accept what they see as reality, even though they know actors and staging are involved.

In fact, television drama and other types of programming are significantly unrealistic in several important areas from which audiences draw impressions. Police work, and the number of policemen, are vastly different in the real, as opposed to the television, world. Similarly, the incidence of violent resolution of conflict, the relationship of aggressors to victims, and the consequences of violence, are unrealistic in their entertainment television portrayal, however plausible – and that may be very plausible – they may appear as drama. The audience is captured on the basis of plausibility and apparent realism, even if the message it gets, often without knowing it, has no basis in fact.

The audience is also drawn in and physically manipulated by the emotion-eliciting properties of content. At a primitive level, our eyes and ears, designed to respond *involuntarily* to movement and dramatic variation in sound, are exploited by the extensive surface motion of action and rapid change in camera shots and a sound track specially designed to get and keep our aural attention. Producers of commercials have refined similar techniques to a 30-second art.

Human beings are genetically programmed to respond emotionally to issues of life (sex, family), and death (violence, attack), including symbolic ones, such as behavioural norms. That is the basis for rooting television drama in structurally formulaized myths, referred to above. For each emotional response, there is a physiological correlate, associated with a distinctive pattern of hormonal secretions. In colloquial terms, that is how we *feel*. Along the way, mind and body respond in one of two general ways: with raised or lowered activation and arousal, or with aversion and withdrawal. At mild levels, media impact of the former kind is pleasant in terms of excitement or relaxation. Media impact of the latter kind is generally associated with discomfort.

Even if television producers didn't test programs on just such a physiological basis – and they do – their intuitive skills in emotional and

physiological manipulation are highly developed. As is suggested by the high incidence of gratuitous violence and action, television producers go to considerable lengths to deliver an exciting product. That is a commercial consideration into which concerns about social effects must not intrude. Commercial broadcasters rarely claim a responsiveness to social concerns unless they coincide with commercial interest. Thus, television is violence sanitized (death without blood), purportedly to lessen its negative effects in compliance with a network violence code. In fact, the harm is not eliminated. What is eliminated is the discomfort of the commercial target, the audience.

Consistent delivery of products that are exciting or relaxing, often manipulatively so, is behind perceptions of television as addictive, a result that serves a number of distinctive commercial purposes.

How the audience locates itself emotionally with respect to dramatic characters is a further key content-related matter. It can be important to several categories of selective perception and social effects described below.

Identification with a dramatic character is one form of emotional location in a television drama. Vicarious experience is furnished by identification, which is based on viewer perceptions of characteristics that are shared with a person (humanity, age, sex) and characteristics that are not (experience, ability, lifestyle, success). The character with which one identifies need not be positive, but frequently is. That is why the star or central character is so important. A negative character may be identified with if the similarities with the viewer are great. For example, real criminals may identify with television criminals.

Because different people have different appetites for identification, successful television drama pulls the audience in by offering a number of possibilities for identification, usually in the form of several attractive characters. The success of a character can constrain a series and reinforce formulaic tendencies. One must be careful not to kill off a section of the audience through the handling of the character with which it identifies.

The viewer may switch his identification with characters in the course of a drama, for a number

of reasons. Indeed, we are dramatically encouraged to identify with the plight or prospects of different characters in different scenes of the program. One of the reassuring things about disaster films is that it is a lot easier to identify with those who survive than with those who succumb.

Viewers may locate themselves emotionally other than by identification with a character. They may fantasize having a relationship with a character other than the relationship the character has with others on the screen. Or they may emotionally position themselves as witnesses to passing events. Both of these are important categories.

Television programs can also attract audiences on more than one level. For example, it has been argued that two Norman Lear series pull in one audience that laughs and sneers at, and another that identifies with, Archie Bunker or Mary Hartman.

These factors are all critical to the central conclusion of the effects studies: that different people are affected by television and other media in different ways. They are affected differently because they bring different personalities, motives and selective perceptions to the media experience. Mass audience content must, to be successful, provide something for everyone in terms of possibilities for emotional interaction.

While the discussion has focused on television, analogous comments apply to films and other fictional media, with qualification. In the case of films and books, the self-selection of the audience and the style take on a greater importance. Self-selection narrows the audience for a particular film (film audiences are much smaller than television audiences anyway), and repeat business is not the major factor it is with television. Film presents many different stylistic possibilities, and the violence is more frequently central to the plot of a film than to that of a television program. Style is also important in literature and popular music. All three media can give the audience a rougher emotional ride than commercial television, which reflects the most conservative concept of what is acceptable.

Many of those same dramatic television properties apply with full force to news. As noted



above, news is very highly formularized. News and fiction drama play on the same hopes, myths and fears.

News conventions are similarly geared to dramatic, not always informational, potential. Immediacy is relevant for emotional impact. Good news stories have good identification possibilities. The exaggeration inherent in selectivity based on violence, conflict and drama dominates the true reality, where the frequency of violence is not proportional to our fears. In television, star newscasters, selection of news (such as fires) for its visual properties, and liberal use of entertainment effects add a further, often ridiculous, dimension. Our eyes, minds and bodies are manipulated by newspaper headlines, layout, and illustrations, and the corresponding production values of television and radio news, just as they are in television drama. And, as noted below, news can have the same kinds of perverse effects on individuals and the social fabric as the entertainment media.

### Effects

Most unfortunately, much of the research has been structured by the rhetoric of debate about media violence issues. The research has thus been coloured by misleading characterizations, false dichotomies and the artificial shifting of the burden of proof.

Early on, the debate became cast as aggression versus catharsis, as effects of media violence.

The catharsis theory has plagued the media violence issue as a pernicious myth. Frequently ill-defined, if at all, it was based on a notion of expulsion of aggressive tendencies through vicarious identification with an aggressor in a film or television presentation. In this form, it is a hybrid of the Aristotelian concept of catharsis based on expulsion of *tragic* feelings through vicarious identification and the Freudian notion of substituting one (non-destructive) aggressive activity for another that could be harmful. The central place of those separate Aristotelian and Freudian notions in our popular culture made the hybrid intuitively plausible.

In the end, the experimental and related evidence is overwhelmingly against the notion of catharsis, in the sense of expulsion of aggression

through vicarious identification. There is impressive documented evidence that media violence consistently increases aggression in a significant although minor portion of the audience, especially in children.

Despite this evidence, the acceptance of catharsis as a serious possibility in terms of media violence effects has not been banished. This may be because most people are reluctant to admit that things they enjoy could have adverse effects; or it may be a research failure to identify and isolate effects that may help to confuse the issue, such as distraction, diversion and relaxation.

The preoccupation with aggression versus catharsis, and the characterization of the problem that implied, interfered with recognition of the range of effects that media violence could be having. These include distorted images of reality, a variety of stress effects and desensitization, as well as entertainment. Modest experimental and survey correlations between exposure to media violence and aggression were interpreted by some as weakness of result. Instead, they should have been a clue that media violence was having a variety of effects on a variety of people.

The over-concentration on aggression also nourished a preoccupation with the existence or non-existence of conclusive proof, according to a standard that may be irrelevant. It has been convenient for some in the media industries to loudly proclaim that the matter was not conclusively proven and that therefore there was no reason for concern. This rhetorical artifice exploited the methodological constraints of social science research in a complex area. Whereas it would be unethical for experimental researchers to attempt to elicit real rapes, murders and aggravated assaults in the laboratory, experimental surrogates were ridiculed as showing no real indication of violence in society. Survey and correlational research that statistically linked real violence with media exposure could be explained away or rendered dubious because there could be – and are – so many other factors at work. But this is purely a negativistic rhetorical argument. Wherever any phenomenon is caused or influenced by a whole range of complex factors, any one influence can be explained away because it is overwhelmed by the combination of all the

other influences. Taken to absurdity, nothing is caused by anything.

Some of the main lines of research, and critics of them, failed to come to grips with complexities of several different kinds.

One is the multi-media perspective. It has always been intuitively implausible that media experiences and their effects are neatly compartmentalized within the individual. Most people experience multi-media exposure and the effects as a composite. Nevertheless, as the Commission's research shows, there are important differences in the users of different media, and in patterns of media use. Multi-media consumption of related content can have counteracting, reinforcing, additive or neutral results in combination with the other kinds of factors discussed below.

Repetition effects have also received less attention than they need in terms of the impact of media violence. This is partly due to the complexities of measuring effects across time, or, as in the case of the Commission, not having enough time to do so.

The research points to two distinct kinds of repetition effects. One is the category of cumulative effects. As with other categories of media effects, these may be different for different people. Alternatively, apparently contradictory effects can operate in reinforcing conjunction in the same individual.

Desensitization to violence is one important category of cumulative effect. Long-term acquisition of norms is another.

Second, some categories of effects that are short-term rather than cumulative can be perpetuated because they are repeatedly elicited. This can apply to aggression based on arousal, or eliciting of hostilities (such as from news reports of crime), both of which are pointed to in the research.

There can also be complex trickery in short-term versus long-term effects. Much research has focused on whether or not effects of media violence, such as aggression, persist from the short into the medium and longer term. This characterization would seem to imply that long-term effects are always short-term effects first; frequently the short-term and long-term effects can be quite different. The same characterization has been used

to imply that short-term effects that fail to persist are unimportant, or can be explained away. On this line of reasoning, we would not be concerned with single murders, but only with repeated murders by the same person across a number of years.

Some effects, including some aggression effects, are plainly short-term, or so the evidence would seem to indicate. They are nevertheless very important, partly because they are so regularly repeated. A more subtle possibility is that positive short-term effects, such as entertainment, excitement and relaxation, may distract us from important long-term effects, especially of cumulative kinds such as desensitization, defensiveness, or negative norm acquisition. It may be noted that the cumulative possibility is increased if people enjoy being exposed to the media. Television may be a lifestyle habit whose short-term pleasures breed long-term consequences.

As already noted, the path to understanding media violence is strewn with a much larger range of possible effects than earlier research had considered. There is now evidence of existence of each of the following categories of media violence effects:

- Violence-related expectations
- Aggression
- Replication of media models and criminal techniques
- Fear and anxiety
- Victimization
- Sensitization and defensiveness
- Desensitization and tolerance
- Distorted images of reality
- Entertainment, arousal and relaxation
- Spread of conflict and confrontation
- Agenda setting and dissemination of information
- Use of violence for media manipulation for the sake of publicity.

It is instructive that *all* these effects can result from both news and entertainment media. Unfortunately, the complexity does not end there. Each category of effect embraces distinctive sub-categories. Effects interact. Demographic, social and personality variables intervene.

Examples of distinctive sub-categories are important. Desensitization may be literal, physiological desensitization to the consequences of

violence, or be based on a more cognitively acquired tolerance norm. One could be aroused to aggressive behaviour in the short term, or acquire it as a long-term behaviour style. Victimization could be based on media-acquired expectations of violence, or on role modelling. It could become a general behavioural pattern, or only be elicited by dramatic situational cue properties.

Effects may operate simultaneously. Aggression as an acquired behavioural norm plausibly goes hand in hand with inaccurate perceptions of the consequences of violence, and the expectation that others are likely to behave violently. An exaggerated, media-fed sense of insecurity could combine with learned aggressiveness as a defensive strategy to produce the fortress mentality. Distorted estimates of the likelihood of violence could produce anxiety that, as a defence mechanism, could be transformed into desensitization.

The evidence is clear that exposure to media violence can lead to aggressive or violent behaviour, although not in everyone all of the time. The evidence also suggests that the relationship of media violence to violence in society has much of the complexity suggested above. Criminals who are, or have been, influenced by media violence have been affected in many different ways. As the research shows, there is considerable complexity in the dynamics of violent and criminal acts being triggered by or copied from media presentations. The best evidence is that there is an interaction of personality, life experience and life circumstances, social and peer processes, distinctive or situational cue properties, and opportunity.

The complexity of the issue makes the sceptics' side of the argument an easy one. The impact of the media as a broad socializing force is important but difficult to prove. The dynamics of society would suggest that the social impact of media violence would not only be subtly pervasive, but would show up in extremes at the fringes of society in ways that are difficult to attribute to any one factor. In much the same way, not everyone loses his job when there is a downturn in the economy; the unemployment impact is largely concentrated on an economic fringe, but everyone is affected in some way.

Despite the complexity, the Commission's

research shows that a society has to be prepared to confront the fact that media violence has a pervasive effect on the social fabric, but one whose dramatic results are primarily displayed in fraying at the fringes. It is not known, and it may never be known, in what particular dynamic pattern media violence is affecting the whole of society. It is known that media violence is creating individually small, but cumulatively significant effects, some of which are potentially harmful.

The same phenomenon can be looked at from two main perspectives – society and the individual. The theory of the social impact of the media posits social and cultural patterns that both shape and are shaped by media content. This is indicated at one level by a correspondence of media content to social and cultural patterns, including shared cultural perceptions based on the television experience or that of the other media.

But media content does not simply reach out to stamp its cultural and normative imprint on society. The evidence indicates that it operates in a more subtle and more powerful way through society's instruments of acculturation and socialization. The family, athletics and peer-group processes are examples.

The interaction between television and the family is undoubtedly the most complicated. Television plays a central role in the intra-family interaction of virtually every North American household. Children are influenced by their parents' viewing habits, parents' reactions to television content, parental attitudes to television use by children, and parents' own behaviour in relation to the television experience. Television not only influences children directly, but through their parents as well, sometimes for ill. These processes can compete with and do not necessarily reinforce the socialization impact of the direct parent-child relationship.

Athletics are a key part of developmental socialization in most societies. What many societies do not have is the extensive mass media involvement in this important socialization area. More than that, North American television increasingly emphasizes those sports with potentially troublesome imitative possibilities. Football and hockey, and, to a lesser extent, boxing, are also the sports that young people, especially males, prefer



to watch. It is certain they are receiving a heavy normative diet of the importance of winning and aggression, sometimes by substituting violent tactics for skill and sportsmanship. It is less certain that they are receiving a substantial diet of pro-social sports content, which can have a powerful, positive effect.

Athletics and the media presentation of athletics are intimately interwoven with peer-group processes. This interweaving assures and reinforces the impact of the media on culture and society. Children, adolescents and adults, each in different ways, take many of their social, cultural and behavioural cues from their peers. Peer processes in turn are heavily nourished by media experiences that are shared, sometimes through promotion and dissemination from within the peer group itself.

It has been demonstrated that media impact can be greatest when reflected and reinforced by associates and acquaintances. Films and popular music are central media in the adolescent experience. Popular music is intimately involved with rebellion against parental influence. Films and popular music are intimately involved in adolescent social and dating patterns.

As experience with the film *A Clockwork Orange* and some other media presentations illustrated, peer-group processes can play a key role in specific replications of media violence.

Among adult populations, mass media experiences are a staple of social interaction and routine conversation, assuring the pervasiveness of the media presence in the social and cultural fabric. In addition, the mass media are known to play specific roles in sub-cultures such as the inner-city poor, and specifically with respect to violence. Media crime and violence appear to be important to criminal sub-cultures in such areas as learning and rationalization of deviant behaviour.

The structure of these various processes of media-group and media-society interaction reinforces the likelihood of pervasive media effects on the social fabric, including its fringes.

An alternative approach is to focus on the individual, and on individual differences with respect to media interactions and effects. There is very considerable variety in the patterns of inter-

action and effects between individuals and mass media content. Personality, lifestyle and life circumstances, motives for viewing, demographic factors and personal relationship variables seem to occur in complex clusters in relation to media effects. The important generalizations are not at all about specific effects across the population as a whole. Rather, the conclusion is that virtually all are affected, but in many, many different ways. The population-at-risk includes everyone. The research shows it is a fraud to promote the idea that only the mentally disordered and deviant are affected. That being the case, the permutations and combinations, including the dangerous ones, are endless.

The interaction of media content with the individual can be approached from the standpoint of selective perceptions, and uses and gratifications. Selective perception plays an important role in the impact of content, for both children and adults. Television programs (and other media content) present far more information than an individual can absorb, especially at a single viewing. Equally important is the fact that viewers tend to see what they want to see, to discover evidence that reinforces the view of the world they already hold. The alienated, authoritarian and "Pollyanna" viewers all tend to see messages that support their beliefs.

Those same beliefs can play a role in the uses and gratifications that are sought from different television programs. An important category of use is with respect to activation or arousal. Viewers may seek out programs to heighten their activation through excitement, or to lower it through relaxation or diversion.

Children are an audience of special importance, but the research indicates that few broad generalizations are meaningful. Parents or others who want to understand the child-television interaction must grapple with a complex of factors. Among the more important are personality, especially introversion and extroversion; the age and stage of cognitive and social development of the child; home circumstances; performance at school; motives for viewing television and specific program categories; and parental attitudes.



## Industry and Policy

The research also shows that the media industries are the way they are for powerful institutional reasons and that they are likely to be resistant to change.

The North American television industry is dominated by the stranglehold of oligopolies: television advertisers, advertising agencies, networks, and major production houses. They are linked together in a strait jacket of commercial bondage.

The Canadian commercial television industry is so tied to the American system that, were it not for government regulation, it could be swallowed whole. Even with that regulation, the battle is being lost. The cost of American programs to Canadian stations is considerably less than the cost of fresh Canadian productions. But American programs generally attract larger audiences and revenues and thus are much more profitable. Except in Quebec, American programs dominate the ratings in major markets, even those where U.S. networks are not yet directly available. Unable to command the production resources to compete, Canadian programs are generally overwhelmed.

Similar results occur with respect to feature films in Canada. The American production system with its much larger resources and larger markets completely dominates. Distribution of films, traditionally a more profitable sector, is also under American control and tied to the American film production system. Trends in film content, such as explicit violence, which may be associated with film industry attempts to compete with television, are automatically reflected in Canada, which the American film industry considers a part of the U.S. domestic market.

The news industries, too, are governed by perceived economic imperatives and their own long-standing conventions. One of the most passionately felt of these is that the news industries always know best and that critics must be viewed with extreme suspicion as probable harbingers of partisan political control over the media. Freedom of the press from governmental influences is jealously guarded in order to maintain an independent position from which the

news media can call government to account.

Furthermore, the belief lingers that, in a democratic country, anyone can establish a newspaper or newsmagazine and contribute his own ideas and opinions to a competitive informational marketplace. However, in practice, the economics of mass communications have drastically curtailed such opportunities, and have steadily reduced the number of news organizations in Canada. The few that do survive wield enormous power in shaping our understanding of the world. Nevertheless, there is only weak recognition of any societal role or accountability for the news media that is not defined entirely by news people themselves.

The research also indicates there are real, and possibly exciting, alternatives for the media industries to consider. Contemporary Quebec is a striking example of a minority cultural system of unusual dynamism. Elsewhere, powerful and broadly based pro-social results have been demonstrated for non-instructional media content, in the areas of information, athletics and entertainment. New media technologies raise the possibilities of social benefits, including convivial interaction among people. Canada does have some real opportunities to redesign its content-delivery system to its own advantage in an attractive way.

But we also face some real dangers if we fail to act. The crassest of commercial interests are poised to use media technologies in even more exploitive and abusive ways, such as through linking pay-TV with instant home buying and gambling and with instant computer deductions from the viewer's bank account.

Censorship is the bogeyman. Historically, new mass media have presented difficult problems of social control. Industry self-regulation may have been successfully palliative, but it has rarely been responsive to real problems and concerns.

In the final analysis, it is not a question of the existence of censorship, but of what kind and by whom. Media content is already subjected to elaborate selection and explicit censorship by the media industries themselves, but any form of government involvement is characterized as evil.

In any case, it is questionable whether censorship has more than a very limited practical

value. Some research indicates that we would be better off if the graphic aspects of film violence were left in, rather than excised by the censor. In more general terms, censorship is a purely negative approach. It does little, if anything, to mobilize energies and resources for the production of alternatives.

One major industry cop-out is its advocacy of parental control as an approach to media violence effects. It is politically sly to distract attention by suggesting that the media would not wish to usurp the parents' role which, in large part, they have already done, and to ignore the accumulated research evidence of a need for media content control at source. It is a fallacy that parents know best in relation to their children and television. Even if they wished to, it is extremely difficult for parents to equip themselves with the relevant information. In any case, parents confront insurmountable obstacles in attempting to control their children's media exposure, or the effects of the media on them. Individual parents do not control all the possible opportunities for their children's television viewing.

Even at home, parents find it hard to regulate children's television use. Program scheduling, even in afternoon and early evening hours, can make the parents' job difficult. Parents themselves may lack the will to control, may use television as a babysitter, or may wish to use television for family purposes. In any case, individual parents can do little about the effects of television on other people's children, and, through them, on their own.

The research also touches on a fundamental feature of the Canadian communications industry and Canadian communications policy: the federal, provincial and regional aspect. The major jurisdictional presence is the federal one, with legislative power over broadcasting and the Criminal Code. The federal government's general powers probably extend to protection of fundamental freedoms.

The provinces and some regions are already an important presence in the Canadian mass media and their regulation. There are significant pressures and aspirations for those to be expanded. Provinces now classify films or control their exhibition. There is legislative potential or

legislative policy to control the distribution of books, magazines and records.

Three provinces, Ontario, Quebec and Alberta, already have broadcasting entities. Perhaps more important, communications policy is increasingly being shaped on a federal-provincial basis. The Commission's research identifies important new possibilities for significant involvement of the provinces in the communications industry, especially in broadcasting.

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## Chapter Three

# Letting the People Speak

When this Royal Commission was appointed in May, 1975, the television season was winding up. *Kojak* was licking lollipops and crime. Meek and crafty Columbo, in the casual, rancid raincoat, was outwitting murderers. Archie Bunker was talking to his wife as if she were a particularly unpleasant insect.

At the local cinema, Charles Bronson was keeping the streets safe by murdering teenagers and Dirk Bogarde, an officer in an apparently jolly concentration camp, was presenting his true love with the head of a fellow prisoner.

Alice Cooper, a rock star who specialized in simulated hangings, decapitations, defenestration and other art forms, was packing them in at concert halls while, at local arenas, hockey stars bashed each other with enthusiasm that was duly reported in print and shown on television.

Did all this violence depicted by the media affect society? What did the people think? Even while the Commission's research program was being designed to produce the essential scientific assessments, all hands accepted that the last word would belong to the people. They were the viewers, readers, ticket-buyers, listeners and, ultimately, the voters. If they did not think the system needed change, there would be no change.

The job was to reach them and make sure they could reach the Commission; to outline the social problems that led to the appointment of the Commission; to offer assistance so that people would feel free to express their ideas and opinions; and then to listen to and carefully consider what they presented.

To make that broadly possible, the Commission was established as a bilingual body, offering all its major publications in both official languages and setting up simultaneous translation services where they were needed. (An offer was made to provide interpretation for Indian communities that wanted it.)

Hearing sites were carefully chosen to reflect the diverse social, economic and geographic makeup of the province and, to stimulate interest throughout the province, the Commissioners, individually and collectively, spoke to more than a hundred classes, groups, and organizations, and appeared on dozens of open-line and interview programs on both radio and television.



In selecting the actual hearing locations in each community, a variety of factors was considered by three people who criss-crossed Ontario in the Commission's early days. What community buildings were located near public transit? Which might be accessible to the handicapped? Which were connected with the life of the community – libraries, schools, places where people like to gather? The Commission met in some of the oldest and best-loved, as well as some of the newest and handsomest buildings in Ontario: the restored City Hall in Kingston, the library in Niagara Falls, the arena in Wikwemikong, the Board of Education Centre in Hamilton, the Courtroom of the Kapuskasing Civic Centre, the cafeteria of the James Bay Educational Centre in Moosonee and others.

Advertisements were placed in all of Ontario's 45 dailies, 320 weeklies and ethnic and religious publications (after being translated into 27 different languages), and were supplemented by local radio spots before each hearing. Television wasn't used because of expense and because it was not possible to specify the programs on which material might appear.

To help focus on the wide range of people's reaction to the media, a film, *Reflections on Violence*, was made for the Commission. It was originally intended as a starter for public meetings; however, demand for the film required 20 prints to be kept in circulation, plus three of a shortened version. The film has been shown to hundreds of classes, groups, organizations and on dozens of community cable systems as well as being telecast in three instalments on three successive nights on the Global Television Network; it has been seen to date by more than 1,500,000 people. It has been shown in Sweden, Australia, West Germany and Norway, and continues to be seen in classrooms and at public meetings in Canada. With the end of the Commission, *Reflections on Violence* is being turned over to a private distributor; it will be available to the people of Ontario at any time on a non-profit basis. It, too, is available in both English and French.

More than 40,000 copies of a brochure outlining the role and operation of the Royal Commission were sent to individuals, groups, schools and

libraries across the province; nearly 2,000 people used an enclosed reply card to ask for further information or publications.

People also asked questions, requested information and expressed their opinions by calling the Commission's toll-free number from all over Ontario.

In seven months and three days of public hearings, beginning in October 1975, and ending in May 1976, the Commission logged about 10,000 miles in aircraft leased from the Government – including two week-long trips to the province's far North. A rented van carrying film projectors, microphones, recording equipment and other hardware for public hearings travelled where it could in northern and southern Ontario. Only two meetings did not start on time – both because the Commissioners, fogged out of Manitoulin Island, flew on to Sault Ste. Marie and got back by road at 1 a.m., causing the two hearings there to be postponed half a day each.

In all, the Commission held 61 hearings in 38 communities and received more than a thousand briefs – 600 in writing from Ontario, a hundred from outside the province, as well as hundreds from people who got up to speak at hearings. The Commission had originally planned to schedule only those who sent written notice of their intention to speak, but decided to be less formal when a 42-day postal strike began the week before the first hearing.

Many meetings were held on Friday nights, to enable people with daytime jobs to participate. As the hearings went on, the Commission received briefs prepared by individuals or families, public and high school classes and individual students, church congregations, women's groups, teachers, clergymen, newspaper publishers, television station owners, advertisers. In Sarnia, Betty Eagles and her daughter Carol researched and wrote a 750-page brief. Many briefs were the result of carefully prepared questionnaires. Some were simple statements without any message other than the writers' feeling that there was too much violence. Others were experience-based essays by social workers, writers, film directors, a cartoonist, the major Canadian record retailer, radio and television network officials and native people. Some were more concerned with sex (not in the

Commission's mandate) than violence. In all, more than 8,000 people attended the Commission's hearings.

Some, it turned out, did not mind late hours. In North Bay on a cold and snowy night, more than half the audience stayed well past midnight, until everyone who wished to speak had been heard. In Sudbury, the longevity record was established: the hearing began at 7:30 p.m. with the customary showing of *Reflections on Violence*; at 8 p.m. the first speaker rose. At 3:30 a.m., with about 25 people still in attendance, the last speaker sat down.

What did the people of Ontario who attended Commission hearings think of media violence and its social consequences? What, if anything, did they think should be done? Most of their concern was for their children. The largest single area of worry was television programming, but they were also unhappy with film and newspapers. Other media elements trailed off in the public's order of priorities. Though the briefs dealt overwhelmingly with aspects of television, concern was expressed about comic books, fairy tales, newspapers, movies, pop records, children's text books. One person complained of violence in the Bible. At the end there was no escaping the conclusion that the majority of those who spoke to the Commission or attended its hearings were strongly critical of the media products offered today.

What follows is a sampling of various points of view and of concepts, comments, and concerns expressed.

A. Ghadirian, of Aylmer, Quebec, presented a brief in Ottawa and described television as "a stranger in [man's] home over whose content he has little control."

Yvon Dicaire, a Cornwall school teacher, quoted Arthur Miller on Robert Kennedy's death: "Any half-educated man in a good suit can make his fortune by concocting a television show whose brutality is photographed in sufficiently monstrous detail." In Niagara Falls, Anne Muggeridge, speaking on behalf of the St. Catharines Diocesan Council of the Catholic Women's League, objected, not so much to media violence, but to the "less spectacular and more destructive attack on the traditional value system of our society carried on all of the time by the media. . . ."

Richard Pulsifer, principal of Georges Vanier School in Kapuskasing, warned that media violence "blinds youth by its flashing brilliance" but asked whether it was "truly necessary to show scenes of rape, brutish behaviour, torture and cruelty and all kinds of abuses in order to be able to properly communicate the main idea of action?"

The Institute of Applied Metaphysics in Ottawa said that television violence imposed the "atrocities of the adult world, convincingly necessary atrocities" on children; objected to the fact that youngsters were being programmed to tolerate and enjoy more violence than they would encounter in "ten lifetimes" and described televised mayhem as "a form of emotional poverty."

Lucille Pakalnis, a registered nurse in Sudbury, provided a vivid description of "... violence glorified as an art form, celebrated and worshipped amidst slow motion, close-up shots complete with mutilation. . . ." Richard Vincent, a communications master of the Nursing Division of George Brown College in Toronto, claimed that "the present emphasis on violence in the communications industry contributes to the students' lack of interest in good literature, their capabilities in basic skills, their respect for institutions, their criticisms toward life generally. It manifests itself in students refusing to cooperate, stirring up others, damaging school property and being quite cruel in their treatment of certain racial groups."

Others agreed on the racial issue. A newspaper cartoon (*Wicks' World*) was accused of bigotry by the Afro-Asian Association of Sault Ste. Marie, and, in Toronto, Rifat Yzunovic complained of racism in a popular American movie of 1976, *The Man Who Would Be King*. The Canadian Association in Support of Native Peoples described the immeasurable harm done by stereotyped images of the " 'savage' or 'stupid' Indian", and said Indian "advancement in the modern world has been stifled because historically they have been treated in the media as savages who plundered, murdered and raped the so-called peace-loving invaders." Paul Eisenbarth, a family physician at West Bay, Manitoulin Island, spoke of psychic violence done to native peoples when textbooks speak of "pioneers" entering "untamed

wilderness” and facing the dangers of “Indian massacres” while failing “to mention the introduction of scalping by the Spaniards,” who were white.

Others objected to media conventions that taught unreality. R.W. Staples of NolaLu pointed out that “children have to learn that [death is] part and parcel of human existence. The current media presentation . . . is a complete distortion. . . . When was the last time you saw [on film or television] someone die in bed surrounded by loved ones . . . ?” In the same vein, Pauline Larabie, principal of Immaculate Conception School in Kapuskasing, pointed out that children see actors in detective and police films being killed one day and reappearing as lively as ever the next. In addition, the child may also see actual events in the news – war, insurrection, robbery, kidnapping, shooting. She asked, “Does the child know that *these* people [those in the news] will never get up again?”

J.E. Callagan, of the department of psychology, College of Social Science, University of Guelph, believes that the media have affected the ongoing Canadian discussion about the morality of capital punishment. The increased demand for reinstatement of the death penalty, he said, “has been influenced, in no small part, by the frequent portrayal of the criminal as being particularly brutal, vicious, cruel, wanton and callous (which many of them of course, may be). The dramatization of such character traits presumed possessed by the criminal, and vividly depicted . . . seems designed to generate in the viewer anger, frustration, hostility and perhaps at times hatred and fear.”

If the media distort the nature of criminals, they evenhandedly distort the role of the police, according to several briefs which complained that the result was decreased understanding of, and respect for, the law and law enforcement. H.H. Graham, Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, contended: “While hundreds of thousands of dollars are being spent throughout North America to improve relations, communications and cooperation between citizens and police and to inform the people of the real intent and purpose of policing activities, many motion pictures and television shows depict the police as quick-trig-

gered, excitement-loving characters who often disregard the law to reach desired ends and who solve many crimes by simply shooting the perpetrator.”

The media, of course, have their own opinions of their role and effect on society and two American networks, responding to invitations from the Commission, filed comprehensive briefs describing their research programs, as well as their rules for the portrayal of violence.

ABC has been carrying on a five-year research study of the effects of violent and non-violent programming on so-called “normal”, “emotionally disturbed” and “socially deprived” children. The results, according to the president, Elton H. Rule, in a statement that was part of ABC’s two-volume brief, appear to establish a relationship between violence and, under certain circumstances and to some degree, aggressive behaviour in some children. He feels that, unfortunately, the present state of knowledge is insufficient to identify these children, the size of the group they comprise and the specific stimuli that cause an increase in aggression.

NBC’s 74-page brief (covering ongoing as well as past research) argues that the less realistically violence is portrayed, the less likely it is to cause aggression in children. It also contends that humorous violence has few “noxious” effects; the less morally justified violence is, the less likely it is to lead to aggression; violence has a different effect when aggressive action is punished rather than rewarded.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in a slender brief (which, because of internal CBC problems, was not presented until seven months after the hearings were over) points out that violence is “part of the human condition” and that “television did not invent violence.”

The Corporation says that it does not know whether violence “for its own sake” has an undesirable effect on the viewer or whether it will do the viewer any good and it, therefore, treats violence negatively.

At the Commission’s request, consultations were held with senior CBC/Radio Canada management. Global Television presented a brief. The only Canadian network that did not present one was CTV; of the major U.S. networks, only CBS did



not make a submission, but it cooperated fully with the Commission in its person-to-person consultations.

Handling of television news was criticized sharply. Some half dozen briefs made specific mention of Lynette Fromme's attempt on the life of United States President Gerald Ford – a bizarre incident in which a member of the Manson gang got her picture on the front pages of newspapers and newsmagazines and assured herself of full-blown media coverage – at least until the next sensation, which turned out to be another woman's attempt on Ford's life. Almost without exception, people were critical of both the print and picture media for their treatment of the story – treatment they characterized as “sensational” and “making her a martyr.”

But the single most frequently mentioned news story was closer to home: the 1975 shootings at the Brampton and Ottawa high schools. Again and again, people drew attention to the similarities between the two incidents and their concern that detailed newspaper reports of the first may have played some part in the second. Beulah Morrison, president of St. Thomas' Anglican Church Women in Moose Factory, said “. . . we feel that far too much publicity is being given to gory details which seem to spark imitation of the crime, or crimes, by psychotic personalities, e.g. the shooting at a Brampton school, followed by a shooting in an Ottawa school.” In Fort Frances, in a brief submitted on behalf of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Louise Chambers expressed the opinion that “the high school murders in Ottawa proved to have been triggered off by the reporting of the Brampton incident,” while the Canadian Association of Social Workers believed that such a connection was “at least suggested by the evidence.”

Betty Boardway of Cameron said the Brampton incident occurred at a time just before her youngest daughter was approached in a schoolyard by an older child who threatened to kill her. The child not only took the incident seriously because she knew that, elsewhere, one school child had killed another, but also expressed anxiety for her father's safety. Her father is a school teacher.

Speaking in Ottawa, D.R. Ferguson said “. . . in

our city recently, a young man killed a girl, went to his school and shot a rifle into a classroom, killing a fellow student before killing himself. The inquest was covered in minute detail by the media. I am sure your Commission has read or has access to . . . the letters to the editors of *The Ottawa Citizen* in which many readers expressed their objection to the coverage in so-called ‘family’ newspapers of the horrible event. You will probably have read the article by the editor of this newspaper explaining why it was necessary to reveal details of this event. I do not agree with him.” David Talbot, a former member of the Metropolitan Toronto Police Department, said, “One can look at the recent episode at a Brampton school which was apparently repeated at an Ottawa school some months later and see that it is obviously due entirely to the coverage the [first] incident received by the news media.”

The editor of *The Globe and Mail*, speaking to the Commission in Toronto, examined the issue at length and a partial transcript of his remarks follows:

*Richard J. Doyle:* We were naturally interested in our own role in the Poulin case because of the comments of the jury which conducted the inquiry into the death in Ottawa, last October. The jury had raised the point that an undue display of violence in the press may have played a role in this particular event. That, I think, could be traced to a comment made to the inquiry by a guidance officer at the school. He noted that *The Globe and Mail*, a few days prior to the Ottawa incident, had carried two stories on the recovery of the two victims of the Brampton shooting, which had occurred earlier that year.

It was interesting that, in his remarks to the jury, the Chief Coroner of Ontario, Dr. Cotnam, said that he himself felt that the press had not overreached in covering the Brampton case, or in covering the case in Ottawa, and perhaps good would result from the community having knowledge of the problems that can exist in family relationships – the kind of problems which had very much to do with the Ottawa shootings. Perhaps that good overtook whatever evil might have resulted from us reminding people in the



community that the Brampton shooting had occurred.

We felt from the beginning of the Brampton incident that we should report, as fully as we could and without undue emphasis, as much of the story as we could. There were aspects of the case that couldn't be reported until witnesses to the events in Brampton had been released from hospital and that is what the two October stories were about.

They dealt with the case and convalescence of the two boys, with their return to their studies and with their recollection of the violence. Each story was fairly prominently displayed.

Were they instrumental in triggering violence in the mind of Poulin a few days later? Did they persuade him to go to his high school and shoot up a classroom and claim the life of one of his schoolmates? The chief psychiatrist who investigated and who testified at the inquest later, said he had to acknowledge that there was a possibility of contagion in reporting of these events. That possibility always existed. He didn't carry his remarks any further; nor did he make any recommendations on the matter.

As it happened [later] . . . the Ontario Coroner's Office held, as a part of a three-day course for coroners in Ontario, a seminar on the events that occurred in Ottawa, dealing with the Poulin case in great detail. I attended it because I thought that there might be some remarks on the recommendations of the jury. It was a fascinating morning. . . . In turn, officers of the Crown, members of the police department and representatives of the Coroner's Office who had participated in the inquest described their parts in the tragic story. Each man spoke as an expert in his discipline, and as a citizen, and all of them said, in one way or another, that this case had changed their perceptions of their roles in society; it had changed their attitudes as citizens. Perhaps the attitudes of a great many people who read newspaper accounts or watched television broadcasts of the proceedings were also changed as they witnessed the soul searching on the question of family relationships, the issue of rights of privacy of young people and the unremarked incidents which can contribute to such tragedies. . . .

Each of the panel participants who mentioned

the press said that he thought that, by and large, the coverage had been fair, and had been accurate and had been useful. The Superintendent of the Detectives in Ottawa put it this way, "There are many people who do not want to read about these things; it is time that they did."

We are dealing here with a boy whose tendencies were developing over a considerable period of time, who had moved from acceptance of the norm of society to a fantasy world, a world in which he was ruled by the extent of his depression at any particular moment in time. He committed his thoughts to his diary. He planned a number of things, including the event that eventually took place, and these plans were recorded in his diary. But nothing was written to indicate what triggered his crimes.

I found nothing that convinced me that we had gone beyond what could be considered reasonable and fair and useful reporting of the whole series of events.

*The Chairman:* That must make you sleep better. . . .

*Mr. Doyle:* No, I don't sleep better, Miss LaMarsh. I don't because I recognize what is out there, and what the problems are, and what the dimensions of the problems are. I don't sleep very well at all, as a result of the three and one half hours of that coroners' review of the case.

*The Chairman:* Was there some apprehension that [your coverage] might have been a contributing factor?

*Mr. Doyle:* I think that if somebody challenges you and says that you are responsible for this, you do a little soul searching, whether you believe it or not.

*The Chairman:* What is your final conclusion – do you believe it or not?

*Mr. Doyle:* In this particular case, I can't deny and I would not deny the possibility of contagion – but I do not say that we should not have run the stories

*The Chairman:* What are the two issues you are balancing – possible contagion, against the pro-social effects of letting people know what may be happening in their own families, plus the public's right to know . . . ?

*Mr. Doyle:* Well, I think the last two points are fairly closely connected; I think the public should

know and when the public does know, it will be able to relate whatever it reads to its own balancing act, if you will.

It wasn't only individual cases to which people objected: they complained about the general philosophy of news treatment in all media. The Sault Ste. Marie and District Labour Council said: "While we would not presume to tell the newspaper industry what it should and should not report, we are concerned with the great increase of not only the type of violence being reported – the wars, murders, rapes, bombings, terrorist attacks – but with the extraordinary attempts to which the media will go to embellish these reports with what they refer to as background information." He cited Fromme as a case in point, in which "newspapers and radio and television were guilty of the same type of reporting. . . ."

Bernice Noblett, past president of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, appearing on behalf of that organization, complained that an "overabundance of violent and sensational items of news with little publicity of items of positive accomplishments gives the erroneous impression that our society is all violent, all immoral and without any standard."

The Canadian Broadcasting League said that coverage of violent news is unavoidable but wondered whether so much detail is necessary. The Concerned Parents of St. Mary's Parish, Fort Frances, complained of news reports that "go into every gory detail" and gave Brampton-Ottawa as an example of the results of such reporting.

Peter Davies of CJRT-FM, the radio station of Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto, felt that news on television was different – and worse – than news in other media. He believes the Commissioners "have a . . . responsibility . . . to censure the producers of television news programs for what they do to reinforce those characteristics of passivity, detachment and cruelty that degrade and make graceless our society. My experience of television news-watching tends to confirm my belief that, in the business of television broadcasting, news coverage is what is visually exciting. A case of 'the bloodier the better' coupled with 'twere well it were done quickly.' Television is different from radio and the press. It is eminently

more dangerous as a threat to our national well-being."

In addition, television was singled out as an important factor by those concerned about sports violence. Audiences routinely gasped and laughed when, in the film *Reflections on Violence*, Norman Jewison, director of *Rollerball*, mentions that sound effects for the bloodthirsty crowd in *Rollerball* had been taken from crowd noise at actual hockey games. Audiences reacted in the same way to another scene in the film when William McMurtry, who conducted an Ontario government study of violence in hockey, showed a U.S. hockey club's advertisement that made no mention of the grace or speed or skill of the game but showed two players battling with each other.

In a brief presented by Lloyd Davidson, the Ontario Hockey Council expressed its dismay. "We have seen in televised hockey a steady increase in the unlawful exercise of physical force over the past several years. The average fan finds it more and more difficult to believe that speed and finesse contribute as much to winning hockey as does brutal intimidation. Children are probably far less confused; they are not familiar with the brand of hockey broadcast in the pre-expansion days of the game, and they have not had sufficient exposure to televised international hockey . . . to make some valid comparisons between the two levels of play."

The Ontario Hockey Council's Parent Education Committee has produced a booklet, *You and Your Child in Hockey*, has distributed more than 200,000 copies across the province and has worked with coaches and referees to improve hockey at the amateur level. Mr. Davidson explained that ". . . the Ontario Hockey Council has proposed remedies for all the major ills that seem to beset amateur hockey, except one. Since its mandate extends only to amateur hockey, it is powerless to influence the on-ice conduct of professional hockey players, which, seen by youngsters mainly through the medium of television, is the single strongest determinant in shaping the attitudes prevalent in minor hockey."

Reflecting these television-based attitudes was Lee Morita, 10 years old and in Grade six at Elizabeth Simcoe Junior Public School in

Toronto. He wrote the Commission a short but pointed letter critical of local minor hockey leagues: "I went up to play for an MTHL [Metro Toronto Hockey League] team and in 14 minutes a fight was on its way. The referee only gave five-minute penalties to each player. I think the players should have been given a game misconduct and what is even worse after the game in the dressing room the players talked about how they fought!" Lee's 11-year old schoolmate, Robert Franchville, was similarly critical.

Another view on hockey violence came in Ottawa from the Citizen's Committee on Children, which said that "the fact of violence . . . in hockey cannot be denied and we should not attempt to shelter our children from all knowledge of its existence. So far as hockey is concerned, it is up to the NHL and the WHA to clean up their act, not the broadcasters. Perhaps some commentators could be reminded, though, that they don't have to show quite so much glee in describing the right to the jaw. It is hockey, not boxing."

Some 40 briefs made comments on sports violence (wrestling and roller derbies, in addition to hockey). A review of the briefs showed that many others mentioned the hockey problem in passing. What came through was a sense of sadness that the game has declined drastically, with skill being replaced by violence, and that the media have greatly assisted this change.

Barry Wenger, publisher of *The Wingham Advance Times*, *The Listowel Banner* and *The Mount Forest Confederate* said, "The most injurious portrayal of violence is that which tends to make heroes out of bullies. The hockey player who has made his place on the team merely because he has the muscle and the weight to flatten his more skilful opponents has, for many youngsters, become the most admirable person in the arena. Thousands of young players seek to emulate the tough-guy example, urged on by their coaches and, all too frequently, by their mothers and fathers."

Cartoons came in for as much criticism as the rest of television. Parents, singly and in groups, complained about the violence of the animated characters that take up large chunks of weekend television time. The most frequently mentioned

were *Road Runner* and *Bugs Bunny* (recently dropped by some networks because of excessive violence). Some two dozen briefs paid special attention to cartoons, but only one, from Scarborough cartoonist Greg Duffell, defended the form. He spoke in glowing terms of "The Golden Age of Animation" between the late 1930s and early 1960s and defended Chuck Jones, *Road Runner*'s creator, pointing out that only a third of the episodes now in circulation are Jones's work and that originally those cartoons were made for adult cinema audiences, not for children.

Many people who presented briefs criticizing television programming were just as critical of the advertisements that bracket it. Anthony J. Grey, director of the Canadian Association of Social Workers, described advertising as inaccurately reflecting society by "concentrating on solid, middle-class types who live in the suburbs" and pointed out the effect on "children exposed to such advertising [who] may wonder why their parents can't afford single-family dwellings and station wagons."

The most consistent complaints were about television advertisements for movies, both theatrical and television presentations. The commercials, most complainants said, took the violence of a 90-minute or two-hour movie and encapsulated it in a message of a minute or less, producing short, incredibly gory and frightening mini-dramas. Some parents spoke bitterly about violent movie commercials being used during programs (including *Romper Room* and a church service), meant for child or family viewing.

In Kingston and Sault Ste. Marie there were criticisms of movie advertisements in newspapers. When *The Kingston Whig-Standard* was criticized by members of the audience for carrying fairly explicit advertisements for the movies of a local drive-in, Fred Madden, advertising director, explained that the paper refused some advertisements "though, I suppose, this could lead to some theatres boasting they'd been banned in *The Whig-Standard* - like being banned in Boston."

In Sault Ste. Marie, *The Sault Star*'s publisher, W.R. Dane, published a front-page reply to criticism of the paper, including its movie advertisements, that had been voiced at the



Commission's hearing. "Movie ads," he wrote, "came under fire because they are sensational. Some of them were offensive to much of the population, but there was never any mistake about the type of movie that was showing. No unsuspecting patron would ever wander into such a movie by mistake.

"On the other hand, the skin flicks often fill the theatre where they are showing, not just once or twice, but for several nights; that means there are people in the community who want to see them. Personally, I am not interested, but I don't believe that I have the right to impose any standards on other people."

Some people in the industry complained that parents misunderstand advertisers. J.J. Cronin, president of the J. Walter Thompson Agency, speaking to the British Columbia Association of Broadcasters in Victoria – a speech that, in addition to a multi-media presentation, comprised J. Walter Thompson's brief to the Commission – said that three out of 10 viewers believe that advertisers are responsible for the programs they see. In its submission, the Association of Canadian Advertisers pointed out that the public doesn't think advertisers are responsible for violent news broadcasting in which their messages appear, yet it does hold them accountable for the content of entertainment programming carrying their commercials, although direct sponsorship of a program is extremely rare today.

The economic realities of television were vividly described by Moses Znaimer, president of CITY-TV, an independent Toronto station. He said, in part, "I don't make one second of violence on CITY-TV; we do 45 hours of weekly programming and we don't manufacture one second of violence . . . violence is imported. The amount of violence on television in this country will abate or disappear or increase, entirely at the whim of American programming, as the fashion of American society dictates . . . because the way the [television] structure is organized involves the purchase of typically foreign, typically American programs. . . . If I go down to buy, [I] can only buy from what is available." As a small-station owner, he said, he has very little from which to select – he chooses programs not bought by larger, richer

stations and is not financially able to originate programming up to the standard to which American broadcasters have accustomed Canadian viewers.

In his words: "The Canadian viewer has been spoiled rotten; he is used to the absolutely sensational best. . . . He insists on not only having the best, he wants it once or, sometimes, two or three times a week. Where else in the world is it the right of the viewer to watch *Kojak* twice a week?"

If programs from England seem the solution to the problem, Mr. Znaimer explained that "the poorest-rated American show . . . will always do better than the finest British show in Canada" and he described the lack of audience interest in "the most exquisite, brilliantly made and produced English program" he could buy.

Though the entertainment and information media – television, newspapers, magazines – were by far the most criticized, a giant in the record industry in Canada suggested that it is *records* that have the most pervasive effect on children. Sam Sniderman (Sam the Record Man) who, along with A&A Records, sells almost half the records and tapes purchased in Canada, pointed out that records are played repeatedly, often in the privacy of youngsters' bedrooms, and therefore have an effect on their listeners unlike that of any other medium. That may not be heartening news to those parents who, like Mary Morris of Mississauga, choose to *listen* to the words of some currently popular discs. The following song lyrics are taken from a transcript of Mrs. Morris's oral submission to the Commission:

He would slash his grannie's face  
up given half the chance.  
He would sell you back the pieces  
all for less than half a quid;  
He thought that he was the meanest,  
until he met with Savage Sid.  
Now Sidney was a greaser with some  
nasty roots;  
He poured a pint of Guinness over  
Benny's boots;  
Benny looked at Sidney; Sidney stared  
right back in his eye;  
Sidney chose a switch blade and Benny  
got a cold meat pie;  
Oh what a terrible sight, much to the  
people's delight – one hell of a sight.



Sidney grabbed a hatchet, buried it into  
Benny's head;  
The people gasped as he bled, the end of  
a Ted?  
Well they dragged him from the wreckage  
of the [inaudible] in bits.  
They tried to stick together all the bits  
that would fit, but some of him was  
missing and part of him arrived too late;  
So now he works for Jesus as the bouncer at  
St. Peter's gate.

[next song]

Step inside, hello, we have the  
most amazing show.  
You will enjoy it all we know, step  
inside, step inside.  
We have thrills and shocks, supersonic  
fighting cops;  
Leave your hammers at the box, come  
inside, come inside.  
Roll up, roll up, roll up, see the show.  
Left behind the bars, rows of bishops'  
heads in jars,  
And a bomb inside of cars, spectacular,  
spectacular.  
If you follow me, there is a specialty,  
Some tears for you to see, misery, misery,  
roll up, roll up, see the show.

Mrs. Morris also read the lyrics of another  
popular recording:

It is getting late;  
Have you seen my mate, Ma  
Tell me when the boys get here;  
It is seven o'clock and I want  
to rock –  
I want to get a belly full of beer.  
My old man is drunker than a barrel  
full of monkeys and my old lady,  
she don't care.

My sister looks cute in her braces  
and boots  
And a handful of grease in her hair.  
So don't give us none of your aggra-  
vation,  
We have had it with your discipline;  
Saturday night is alright for fighting,  
let's get a little action in;  
Get about as oiled as a diesel train,  
going to set this dance alright,  
Because Saturday night is the  
night I like;  
Saturday night is alright, alright.  
Well they are packed pretty tight  
in here tonight

And I am looking for a dolly who  
will see me right  
I may use a little muscle to get  
what I need;  
I may sink a little drink and shout  
out she's with me.  
A couple of sounds that I really  
like are the sound of a switchblade  
and a motor bike.  
Product of the working class;  
Whose best friend floats in the bottom  
of a glass.

Mrs. Morris then quoted "not only what I  
consider a violent song, but a real putdown of  
women":

I have seen a lot of women who  
haven't had much luck;  
I have seen you looking like you  
have been run down by a truck.  
That ain't nice to say, sometimes  
I guess I am really hard;  
But I am going to put buckshot in  
your pants if you step into my  
yard.  
When I watch the police come by and  
move you one;  
Well, I sometimes wonder what is  
beneath the mess you have become.  
While you may have been a pioneer  
in the trade of women's war,  
But all you have got is a mop-up job  
washing other people's stairs.  
I am going to tell the world you are  
a dirty little girl.  
Someone grab that bitch by the ears,  
rub her down,  
Scrub her back and turn her inside out;  
Because I bet she hasn't had a bath in  
years.  
Here's my own belief about all the dirty  
girls–  
That you have to clean the oyster to find  
the pearls,  
And like rags that belong to you, I  
belong to myself,  
So don't show up around here  
Until your social worker has helped. . . .

Her last example was not only violent but sick:

I love the dead before they are cold,  
Their blueing flesh for me to hold  
Eyes upon me to see nothing;  
I love the dead before they rise, no  
farewells, no goodbyes;

I never even knew your rotting face,  
while friends and lovers mourn  
your silly grave;  
I have other uses for you darling  
We love the dead, we love the dead – ya.

What about the concerts and movies to which people go, presumably after some deliberation, leaving their homes and paying for their seats?

The most frequently mentioned concert star was Alice Cooper. Several people drew attention to an incident in Calgary in which a youngster, after watching Cooper appear to hang himself in a televised concert, accidentally killed himself while trying to copy the feat.

It was clear from submissions that, when Canadians now think about movies, they blur the distinction between *going out* to see a film and watching one on television. R.W. Staples said, “The public hangings are dead, but their savagery . . . is alive and well and living in such media offerings as *S.W.A.T.*, *Mannix*, *Cannon*, or innumerable ‘Dirty-Harry-Death-Wish-For-a-Few-Dollars-More’ types who kill for our viewing pleasure.”

The movies most often complained of were mid-1970s offerings such as *Jaws*, *The Godfather*, *Rollerball* and *The Exorcist* (only *The Godfather* had been televised by the time hearings were over). Principal Richard Pulsifer described a film audience applauding scenes in *Jaws* when “bloody pieces of flesh were flying all around every which way” and compared it to George Orwell’s *1984*, when the mob applauded the dismembering of a human being.

One of the first letters received by the Commission complained of the movies shown on airlines: G.S. Arbus of Toronto described a movie, *The Spikes’ Gang*, as it was run on a plane he was taking from Europe to Toronto: “Here were three young innocent boys with no past history of crime . . . who become bored with life . . . and decide, because life is not exciting, they will ‘take up’ with [a bank robber]. Before the end of the movie, they have killed several people and they themselves have been killed.”

Enquiries to the major airlines flying out of Ontario brought assurances that most are wary of violence: while SAS (Scandinavian Airlines) refuses

any film with an “inordinate amount of violence, sex or crime,” British Airways shows films if gratuitous violence can be cut and if the violence is crucial to the plot. Air Canada, using the American rating system, runs only those films that have obtained a G (for general audiences) or PG (parental guidance recommended) rating. It incorporates additional editing as required by television. However, when Commission members, using Air Canada wherever possible, checked the airline’s movie schedules, they discovered that five out of six movies were violent, and at least one, *French Connection II*, carried a Restricted rating in Ontario.

Almost every specific complaint about the media, excepting only newspapers, was in regard to an American product. Some briefs underlined that fact.

The Children’s Broadcast Institute pointed out that Canada produces virtually no violent fictional television programming “but there is a river of American programming being purchased that is violent. Worthwhile professional Canadian programming is playing to a theatre in which most of the seats are facing the other way.”

Sharron McLauchlan of Mississauga decided to find out whether Canadian television programs for young children were indeed pro-social and studied four of them. “*Polka Dot Door*, *Friendly Giant* and *Mr. Dressup* all score very high on pro-social values and low on anti-social values and, in almost every case, anti-social behaviour or conversation was used in a constructive way.” *Uncle Bobby*, on the other hand, lacked “this redeeming quality,” she said.

Garth Jowett, who later undertook research for the Commission, spoke at the Windsor hearing. He described foreign domination of Canadian media as a vital part of the complex problem of violence: “Any policeman in the country will verify that Canadians’ concepts of criminal procedures are so warped by constant exposure to the American model that many are totally ignorant of legal procedures in Canada. We have heard for many years that Canadian school children know more about the United States than they know about their own country; this, too, is the result of constant media exposure to American content.

How long will we continue to tolerate this constant subversion of our own socialization process?" he asked.

A final eloquent word on foreign domination of our culture came from Bill Boyle of the Toronto Filmmakers' Co-Op: "Film is the most influential of media. It depicts life in detail and it identifies who and what we are with a subtle understanding that is seldom consciously realized. Through it we gain our standards of morality and social behaviour. Through it we see ourselves as through a mirror. There can be no doubt as to its power, especially over our youth. The great tragedy is that the image in the mirror is not ours; that moral standards that are exemplified are not ours; the who and what that we see on the screen are not accurate [for Canadians]. They belong to someone else and we are left isolated one from another."

There was another side to the gloomy picture of the media presented by most of the people who made submissions to the Commission. That case was put forward energetically on several occasions – not always by members of the media industry. The media's explanation – or defence – of itself was made up of two separate arguments. One centred on entertainment violence. The other, more complex, dealt with censorship and the role of the media in a free society.

The most frequently proffered explanation of fictional media violence was that it was "cathartic". One of several media spokesmen who made that point was Norman Marshall, Hamilton broadcaster, a member of the Communications Arts Department of Mohawk College. He called the Commissioners' attention to 10-year-old studies showing cathartic effects. Richard Goranson, research psychologist at York University (later the author of a study undertaken for the Commission) rejected the "catharsis" theory in a Toronto brief titled "The Myth of Vicarious Aggression Catharsis". He said, "the idea of vicarious aggression catharsis does not come from Aristotle; it runs counter to common sense and it is contradicted by a large body of research. . . ."

The Canadian Association of Broadcasters refused to present a brief, but their regional arm, the Central Canada Broadcasters' Association,

pointed out that "violence was not invented or discovered by the media" and "Canadian stations generate their maximum revenues from high audience-producing, non-Canadian programming and most of these are American-produced." Which American programs? According to J.J. Cronin, president of the J. Walter Thompson agency (in his Victoria speech), "Canadians aren't lapping up violence and, when alternatives are possible, the audience selects those alternatives." He said the most popular programs in common coverage survey areas include *Disney World*, *All in the Family*, *Happy Days*, *Rhoda*, *M\*A\*S\*H*, *Chico and the Man*, *The Waltons*, *Carol Burnett* and *Sonny and Cher*: "... these certainly hold their own against *Kojak* and *Hockey Night in Canada*. . . ."

George Lund, manager of CKSO-TV in Sudbury said "... television stations do not decide what programs are going to be aired, the viewers do. If people watch *Swiss Family Robinson* in small numbers and *Baretta* in great numbers, the viewer is, in effect, making a decision on what programs will be aired."

Kawartha Broadcasting Co., Limited rejected the blame for social violence placed on television, which "wasn't around at the time of the Romans and the Christians or when Hitler came to power or when there were fights between the Indians and the American cavalry. By far the majority of offenders on television are caught and punished and viewers are being educated that crime doesn't pay."

But the most forcefully stated defence of the media was the need to cherish their freedom of expression and the dangers to society inherent in any attempt to censor them. That point of view was stated by representatives of the three Toronto dailies:

Douglas Creighton, publisher and editor-in-chief of *The Toronto Sun*: "... half of the world's press is not free and danger to freedom occurs when controls, no matter how well meaning, are initiated. It's a mark of democracy that the press is filled with bad news; when the press is filled with good news, one can be pretty sure the jails are filled with good men."

Richard Malone, publisher of *The Globe and Mail*: "... press freedom is a principle inherent

not only in the constitutional structure of Canada, but is an essential ingredient in the democratic process. The public has a right to know and we have a responsibility to inform them. . . . Hiding reports of violence or brutality would do a disservice to the community and would blind the public to reality and the need for remedy; newspapers, far from exploiting or provoking violence, have played a major role in seeking to find its causes and cures."

Martin Goodman, editor-in-chief of *The Toronto Star*: "The press of Canada, like all its public institutions, is dedicated to the achievement of a society free from violence. That condition will be achieved only if the citizen is informed of the dangers which threaten – not when such knowledge is glossed over or suppressed."

For Douglas Trowell, president of Shoreacres Broadcasting " . . . there is nothing more violent than taking control of someone else. *That . . . is* violence, no matter *how* well-meaning the intent. *That's* the kind of violence I am concerned about most."

W.R. Dane of *The Sault Star* pointed out there is a difference " . . . between violence in fictional weekly series on television, and violence that appears in our world and must be reported by the news. There is good news too, plenty of it. But we can't ignore the bad news and, as a society, we cannot come to grips with solving the problems of this world if we don't know what the problems are. . . . A newspaper is a mirror of the world in which it functions and, as Gogol said in his satire comedy, *The Inspector General*, 'Don't blame the mirror if your face is faulty.' "

Not all the concern about censorship was expressed by media spokesmen. From the Shamrock Co-Operative Nursery School in Bridgenorth: " . . . censorships rests ultimately with the individual. . . . We are not, in principle, against censorship, but we are against those censors who say they act out of virtue. For, of course, virtue means repression: those who believe in virtue must make certain that virtue is respected. . . . "

The Dryden Board of Education: "Censorship is not the answer. This would only bring us closer

to George Orwell's *1984*, a step all Canadians must resist."

The Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee on Violence in the Windsor Community: "While we urge mass media to initiate effective self-regulatory actions that would make their contents consistent with society's earnest expressions about the excessive volume of depicted violence, we also urge the Royal Commission to suspend the option of censorship of media content to achieve the same end."

Rebecca Johnson, Chairman of the Advisory Committee, CKPR-TV, Thunder Bay: " . . . the Commission's terms of reference lean toward censorship if all other remedies fail, a solution that would be of no help in solving the problem and should be resisted."

Raymond Smith, director of the Algonquin Regional Library System: "I question anything that impedes the free flow of information. . . . Would I be required to remove a book like *Clockwork Orange* from the shelves if the movies were regarded as too violent for television?"

The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations: "In our view, the present situation does *not* call for government censorship."

The other side of the censorship argument came from several people, including D.R. Ferguson of Ottawa who opposed "media people who use the slogan 'freedom of the press' as a licence to do what they want", Wilfred Nuss of Fanshawe College who believes "it is time for the government to step in and remove violence from television" and Betty Borg of Peterborough who concludes that " . . . we, as a society, must restrict the freedom of those who would make fortunes from our weakness and shortsightedness." A survey of 119 households in Sioux Lookout showed that people felt that an outside agency like government should censor television.

Given that people are so deeply dissatisfied, how do they actually use the media ? The answers came in detailed surveys done by many church and school groups. They revealed some fascinating aspects of our love-hate relationship with the media – especially, of course, with that "stranger in our homes", television.

When do children watch television? A



Hamilton survey showed that young children watch it in the morning, older children in the evening. In Sioux Lookout, survey results showed that 80 per cent watched television after school and at night while only 4 per cent of the surveyed youngsters (whose average age was eight years) watched in the morning. When the Sioux group asked children in Grades seven and eight, it found that 98 per cent watched in the evening.

How much do children watch? According to the London Board of Education, 25 per cent of all children ages two to 11 watch at least one half hour of violent programming and another half hour of cartoons with violent content daily. St. Lawrence College in Cornwall found that 50 per cent of children watch more than three hours daily, while at Sioux Lookout, 50 per cent of Grade seven and eight youngsters watched from one to three hours, 40 per cent from three to six hours and 10 per cent more than that.

How late do children stay up and, therefore, how late may they be watching television? In a study by EDUCOM, a Hamilton group, bedtime for young children ranged from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Among nine- to 12-year-olds it was from 8:30 to 10 p.m. Among adolescents, it was after 9:30 p.m. All age groups stayed up later on weekends. A study by students at Grimsby High School showed that 67 per cent of children aged seven to 15 stayed up past 9:00 p.m.

Do people monitor or censor what their children watch? In Sioux Lookout the answer was a resounding yes and in Grimsby the answer was yes, while children are in kindergarten – when 60 per cent of parents restrict cartoon watching. By Grade five, parents seem unaware of their children's television diet; by Grade six, only 10 per cent are imposing any restrictions. The St. Lawrence College group also found that parents are unaware of what their youngsters are watching.

The Rotary Club of Kenora surveyed 38 of its members, of whom 74 per cent said it was the parents' responsibility to monitor what their children watch, but only 14 per cent said they monitor a great deal.

What television programs do children watch? In the Sioux Lookout survey (the children's average age was eight): 42 per cent liked *Bugs Bunny* best;

38 per cent *The Partridge Family*; 27 per cent *Sesame Street*.

The Grimsby study favourites included *Popeye*, *Bugs Bunny*, *Road Runner*, *M\*A\*S\*H* and *S.W.A.T.* Favourites among Grade five students in Grimsby are "violent".

The Hamilton Board of Education used two test groups, one that watched more, and the other that watched less than three hours per day. The "more" group liked detective and police stories as well as sporting events in which qualities of toughness were admired. The "less than three hour" watchers preferred medical and adventure stories that showed qualities of problem-solving.

In Grimsby, children aged seven to nine liked the greatest variety of programs including *Six Million Dollar Man*, *Happy Days*, *Baretta* and *Star Trek*. Ages 10 to 11 liked *S.W.A.T.*, *Hogan's Heroes* and *Welcome Back, Kotter*. Ages 12 to 15 liked *S.W.A.T.*, *Starsky and Hutch* and *Baretta*. Every single one of these programs is U.S.-produced. Grade eight students identified with superpeople including Spiderman, Batman, Superman.

In Sioux Lookout, 40 per cent of youngsters liked "funny" shows while 24 per cent liked those that were "scary".

What comic books and strips do children like? In a Stratford Central Secondary School survey of children nine to 12, the favourite comics were *Archie*, *Peanuts*, *Spiderman*, *Bugs Bunny*, *Richie Rich*, *Mad*, *Mickey Mouse*, *Dennis the Menace*, *Porky Pig*. Their favourite comic strips were *Peanuts* (39 per cent) and *Hi and Lois* (10 per cent).

In Sarnia, the Nu Chapter of Delta Chi Sigma said that most children reported "they can very seldom read comics because 'who can afford them?'"

What do people think of media violence? Ninety per cent of parishioners of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Fort Frances who were polled thought there was too much violence in the media today; 62 per cent of the people surveyed in the St. Lawrence College poll thought television violence affected mental health; in the Brampton Business and Professional Women's survey, 81 per cent of youngsters viewed programs

they said they would never forget and 20 to 28 per cent of the adults surveyed had no opinion on the amount of television violence.

In the Sioux Lookout survey, 72 per cent of the 119 households that responded thought violence on television influenced violence in society to some degree.

A survey at the Port Colborne High School found that “both sexes think that television is the most influential part of the communications industry; that violence corrupts younger and younger minds; that crime portrayed on television is easily repeatable by desperate people and that students themselves are vulnerable to all they see and read and they have become insensitive to violence – a fact that creates some fear among them.”

Finally, in an aside, a survey by the Man in Society class 400 of Queen Elizabeth High School in Sioux Lookout asked young children to pick what they'd like to be: 48 per cent said they'd like to be a gorilla; 16 per cent a fish; 24 per cent a baby turtle and 12 per cent a tree!

As their surveys showed, people consume great quantities of media and, as their criticisms showed, many don't like what they see. Why? While many submissions merely mentioned the effects of the media, others concentrated on that aspect of the question.

Judge Raymond J.B. Cramer of the Provincial Judges' Court said, “Continual subjection to violence in the media leads people to live in fear and to feel indifferent toward violence in reality.” Mary Mainwaring and Mrs. H.D. Saravannamuttoo of Ottawa contended that “the effect . . . on average adolescents is to increase factors which are normally characteristic . . . of the psychologically alienated, and sometimes the socially alienated, person.”

The media, television in particular, tell us how we are expected to act, according to many of the briefs and surveys the Commission received from behavioural scientists and from lay people observing life in their own families.

Robert C. Kaill, of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Guelph: “When the alleged hero of a story displays violence in achieving legitimate goals, violence

itself is legitimated. For example, *Kojak* offers weekly proof that the only effective way to deal with lawbreakers, or those suspected of having committed an offence, is through the roughest type of physical and psychological ferocity. It only serves to convince immature viewers, both young and old, that this is an appropriate manner in which to deal with other people.”

A member of the audience in Kingston described how her young son played hockey: he and his friend passed the ball they were using back and forth, then threw down their sticks and fought. The reason: watching the game on television had led them to assume that hockey consists of passing the puck and then battling.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police warned that “many programs, without being physically and bloodily violent per se, are quite explicit about illegal operations and rackets, particularly of the extortion kind, and are sowing many ideas in younger minds. . . . We feel that once a modus vivendi has been established, there is not much that can influence the actions of a person, but, during the formative years, the subject matter presented to a young mind is critical.”

School teachers and parents were alarmed about the increase and amount of violence in the schoolyard, and school vandalism as well as other negative effects were ascribed to the influence of the media. The Board of Education of North York found that an overwhelming number of kindergarten and Grade three teachers and nearly half of those who teach Grade six have seen behaviour they trace to television, especially imitations of television personalities and characters, including the *Six Million Dollar Man*, *Batman*, and Evel Knievel. There have been incidents of poor sportsmanship, bad language, fighting, the use of Oriental martial arts and weapons, as well as more generally passive behaviour, less time spent out-of-doors, less reading, a lack of creativity and imagination, and a poor attention span.

The Sudbury and District Roman Catholic School Board called school play “the heartbeat indicator of children's inner thoughts” that has become more violent in recent years. “So-called fun games are gone and are replaced by games such as rape, which one teacher described being

played in the schoolyard by Grade five students, and Kung Fu, which dominated the play sessions of all ages.”

Youngsters themselves complained of increasing rough play and bad language. Other teacher complaints: violence in creative writing and more violent verbal exchanges such as, “I’ll kill you.”

Kathryn Nicholson, a teacher in Sioux Lookout, noted an increase in violent schoolyard play. The Hastings-Prince Edward County Roman Catholic Separate School Board observed Kung Fu and *Six Million Dollar Man* imitations mentioned by others. Vivian Laukkanen of Geraldton noted swaggering “Fonzie and Sweathog types”, as well as Kung Fu schoolyard fighting. “Following a number of television detective dramas dealing with arson, our community was plagued with several incidents,” she says. “There is an increasing lack of reverence for another person’s life and property . . . violence in broadcasting and television is contributing to the decline of our civilization.”

Margaret Maier, a supply teacher in Thunder Bay, complained that children “cannot write simple stories without aping what they see on television; the length of their stories is directly related to the number of persons killed or injured . . . there is no original imagination. . . .” Other than a half-dozen one-page efforts, stories “reflect the strong emotions of violent people, or the indifference to killing on the indestructible, insensitive ego of the author . . . 90 per cent . . . of classroom journalism or creative writing deals with killing, robbing or playful violence.”

W.A. Book, the principal of Fort Frances High School, observed that “Girls have become much more physical, to the point where there is sometimes alley fighting; their language has become even more violent than their acts. Boys and young men who traditionally have been physical in their combat are still physical, but what used to be fist fights have become unarmed combat, with no rules except to maim or kill the opponent. More fights result in hospitalization than used to. . . .”

Other populations are no better off: the Toronto Board of Education found advertising full of “blatant and obvious abuse of women.” Social

scientist J.E. Callagan of the University of Guelph said that television now portrays “significantly more females playing major criminal roles than was the practice previously, and it may be possible to assess any effects of this trend on the incidence and type of female crime in the future. . . .”

Lynne Thornburg of Thunder Bay, in a thoughtful examination of the role of the media in the socialization of males and females, called the current portrayal of women “stereotypic . . . intermingled with wife/mother are simpleton, whore, sex object and victim. Current movies are peopled with abused, neglected and dehumanized women. The impact [of media models] served to place a wedge between the sexes, and may perpetuate the victimization of women in the media, and in reality. . . . Perhaps for some children it is difficult to distinguish which is truly real – the parental model or the media presentation.”

Trevor Thomas, executive director of Mental Health/Waterloo spoke of the media presentation of another minority: “. . . inclusion of statements such as ‘a former mental patient recently released from a psychiatric hospital’ leads to the perpetuation of the myth that people who have received psychiatric care are dangerous and violent. Research has shown that these people are less likely to commit crime than someone not receiving such assistance.” He added: “As the co-ordinator of Parents Anonymous of Kitchener/Waterloo, I am also upset about the coroner releasing information on child abuse cases for the press in order to shock the public. . . . This method of reporting tends to lead to public outcry for legal action . . . and will only lead to an increase in the incidence of child abuse.”

John Elliot of the Niagara Region Family and Child Services Agency said that the Children’s Aid Society worries that “the constant bombardment of violence in the media may lead to its normalization in society; children assume that the world is really like the brutal, uncontrolled chaos portrayed on television and in the movies. Children with personal or social problems who have a need for immediate gratification may seek escape in the pictorial media and may identify with reported situations in which they find stimulation for instinctual gratification with dangerous results.”



Mr. Elliot cited as an example a 15-year-old girl who told her foster mother she'd like to put a knife in someone and turn it and said that she had got this idea from reports of a recent stabbing of a 16-year-old girl in the Toronto subway. "Combined with fear, frustration, anger and a breadth of other factors, the portrayal and publicizing of violence seems to form a contagious circle where violence feeds on publicity and publicity feeds on violence. We are far less outraged than we ought to be through the dulling of our sensibilities by the unrelenting media portrayal of brutality."

Nor does age protect people from the apparent harm of media fallout. A brief from the Good Companions Senior Citizens Centre in Ottawa said that "senior citizens often become the victims of television violence. . . . Purse snatching and mugging on the streets . . . make [them] fear to leave their premises or walk on the streets alone. . . . [They] also fear for their grandchildren and wonder what effect this violence will have on them."

Paul S. Licker of the Institute of Social Communications at St. Paul University in Ottawa, in a personal brief titled "Chacun à son goût: Special Effects for Special People", urged more research into the effects of media violence on older people who ". . . can recollect and analyze their own past . . . but, unlike children, don't have a future for application of a remedy to harm."

And, finally, a story about the effect of a newspaper report on one young man. By coincidence, the Commission heard from David Talbot, of Bancroft, formerly with the Metropolitan Toronto Police Department, about an incident in which he picked up a young Indian who had attempted suicide in front of a Toronto subway train. The youth himself, five weeks before, had told the Commission about that incident at a hearing nearly 400 miles from Bancroft. Both accounts agreed on the essentials: the young native had been depressed after having read a story in *The Toronto Star* about another Indian who had committed suicide at the same location two days earlier. He felt that he was "a nobody and that by committing suicide [he] would hit the headlines and therefore be remembered, at least for a while, as a somebody."

The communications industry was not the only group of which people were critical: many editorial writers and academics were opposed to at least some aspects of the Commission itself.

Desmond Ellis of the department of sociology at York University felt that the presence of the Commission diverted attention and funding of research from the "real" causes of violence – social conditions such as overcrowding, poverty and inadequate housing.

David Bradley, chairman of the communication arts division of St. Clair College of Applied Arts and Technology complained of "thinly-veiled threats" in the Commission's Interim Report "which have transformed what would have been a temperate dispute into a confrontation. . . . The Commission's mandate is simplistic and narrow."

Most people thought not. Most men, women and children who spoke at hearings did so in a tone that was concerned, moderate and hopeful. If publisher Jack McClelland, appearing in the film, *Reflections on Violence*, thought that the purpose of business was not to do good but to please the stockholders, there were others who thought the two things might be accomplished simultaneously. For instance, the lively J. Walter Thompson multimedia presentation warned that advertising messages were being drowned in program gore and urged advertisers to reconsider their association with violent programs.

Barry Wenger pointed out that "newspaper editors have the opportunity and the responsibility to say in plain words that decent people abhor violence in every form. Many of them do so and quite a few do not."

It was particularly useful that people, having said what distressed them, were able to make constructive suggestions. Literally thousands of recommendations were made to the Commission in submissions, surveys, reports and letters.

One idea frequently put forth was that schools should offer courses in media literacy for people of all ages, enabling them to understand and consume media more intelligently and knowledgeably.

Seth Feldman of the department of English at the University of Western Ontario, in a personal



submission, said that “courses in film and television in elementary and high schools are still regarded as luxury items, and have, along with other teaching innovations, come under attack for distracting students from their studies of the ‘basics’. Yet, one might ask, what could be more basic to a child’s education than an understanding of the 20,000 hours of television and film he or she will watch before his or her eighteenth birthday? Have the children who live amid this on-screen fantasy world ever been made aware of how it works, who controls it, or indeed why it exists, what it may be doing to them, and what alternatives there may be to the status quo? Would it, for example, be an educational luxury or an undue distraction to make the findings of this Commission available to the children with whom the Commission has been so concerned?”

Among other suggestions:

- Classify television, as well as movies, for the amount of violence programs contain.
- Give wide distribution to such classifications, either through television guides, special televised warnings or in government-distributed notices (such as enclosures with Family Allowance cheques).
- Provide explicit information about the content of programs, especially those containing material that, by its violent or sexual nature, may not be suitable for viewing by people of all ages.
- Monitor programs, either by independent boards or by government.
- Reschedule violent programs for late evening – as late as midnight.
- Implement previously announced plans to expand TVOntario, the provincial educational network, particularly into the North, where there is little television choice.
- Support from the Ontario Arts Council for writers, artists and technicians.
- Family viewing times, starting as early as 4 and going as late as 10 p.m. (although most recommended the 7 to 9 p.m. hours then in effect in the United States).
- Content censoring by the Canadian Radio-Tellevision and Telecommunications Commission.
- Laying of criminal charges when unnecessary violence occurs in sporting events.
- Deletion of violent or otherwise inappropriate trailers for coming attractions in cinemas when children’s movies are being played and in early hours on television.
- Better enforcement of the present laws governing admission of juveniles when restricted movies are being shown.
- Responsibility by advertisers for the material presented in programs on which they buy time.
- A primer on how to watch television.

Though they asked industry and government to make improvements, many people other than industry spokesmen urged greatly increased family responsibility: parents, they said, must monitor their children’s television exposure and set a time limit each day; parents have a responsibility to check television guides, select programs for their children and discuss what they see.

The Vanier Institute of the Family summed it up: “It’s not up to the government and broadcasting industry alone to exercise caution or judgment, but up to all of us. . . .”

Judging by their interest and concern, a good many people in Ontario are willing and eager to take up that challenge.

# The Conclusions

After approximately two years of investigations, the Commissioners look again at the instructions given when this body was set up in May, 1975.

1. *The Commission was to study the effects on society of the increasing exhibition of violence in the communications industry.* This has been done in three major fields: previous research, present public perceptions and commissioned new research. A permanent library of all available literature on the subject, more than 4,000 titles, has been assembled. These range from major studies published in multi-volume book form to scholarly papers reporting the results of individual field and laboratory experiments focused on single elements in the overall subject. Commissioners visited 15 countries where governments, broadcast institutions, academics and others have been and are investigating, and, in some cases, challenging, the effects of media violence. The subject was discussed at length in major entertainment and news production centres in the United States – by far the world's main supplier of violent television and films – with actors, critics, censors, scientists, public and private agencies, writers, directors, producers and network executives. In Canada, research was commissioned to fill perceived gaps in the existing research, and to relate the problem to Canadian experience.
2. *The Commission was to determine if there is any connection or a cause-and-effect relationship between this phenomenon and the incidence of violent crime in society.* The short answer is yes. How serious an effect is less clear. Crime rates that rise or fall marginally year by year are not a conclusive factor, because no one knows or can say what the situation would be if the phenomenon of increasing depiction of violence in the communications industry did not exist at its present high level. Certainly, media violence is not the sole cause of crime. However, it is one of the few that have been measured – even though the measurements may differ – of all the social circumstances that have been present as society has become increasingly violent. Many people are becoming more indifferent to violence being perpetrated against others, as well as becoming more fearful of their own safety both at home and in the streets,

parks and neighbourhoods. If the amount of depicted violence that exists in the North American intellectual environment could be expressed in terms of a potentially dangerous food or drink additive, an air or water pollutant such as lead or asbestos or mercury, or other hazard to humans, there is little doubt that society long since would have demanded a stop to it, as society has done in denouncing hazards that are directly measurable in terms of physical illness or death.

3. *The Commission was to hold public hearings to enable groups and organizations, individual citizens and representatives of the communications industry to make known their views on the subject.* This was done. At 61 public hearings in towns and cities representing all regions of Ontario, entertainment television was the main target of criticism for violent content, followed by films, news in newspapers and on television, books, comic books, magazines, rock music and radio. Written briefs, submissions or letters were received from more than 1,000 individuals and organizations. Most citizens, from octogenarians to school children, seemed to feel in their bones that no good, and perhaps considerable harm, could come to society when television, and, to a lesser extent other media, devoted so much time and space to brutality, from crime programs to violent incidents in sports events. Entertainment television spokesmen entered no defence on moral or ethical grounds, obviously there being none to enter, but argued that competitively – to continue to make profits – they had no choice. They seemed to place profit above responsibility. News and other print media argued that their job was to report news and public affairs, violent and non-violent – or, in the case of books, that artistic freedom justified any seeming excesses.

4. *The Commission was to make appropriate recommendations, if warranted, on measures to be taken by the Government of Ontario, by other levels of government, by the general public and by the communications industry.* In working toward a set of recommendations once all hearings and foreign consultations were concluded, all new research finished, and all previous research assessed, the Commissioners had to come to grips with the

attitudes formed in intensive association with the subject for more than two years. In every country where the subject had been examined, the great weight of research of all kinds, in many languages, indicated the potentially harmful effects of violent media content. This research had caused some governments to ban altogether certain programs that are routinely seen in Canada. In addition, in the United States, the American Medical Association, the Parent-Teachers Associations (PTA) and Action for Children's Television (ACT) have put pressure on media industries to clean up their acts. The Ontario government and some major Canadian and American companies have given orders forbidding use of their television commercials in connection with violent fare. Advertising agencies – notably the world's largest, J. Walter Thompson – have cautioned their clients against using violent vehicles for their advertising. So there seems to be an increased awareness and conviction in many parts of society that media violence is a social menace and, as such, must be dealt with. This confirms the opinions the Commission reached from its own work.

Many sources, both academic and industrial, contributed to a general picture of what caused the dramatic escalation in depicted violence. It was seen 50 years ago as a problem in radio. When television arrived as a major force 30 years ago (25 years ago in Canada), violence in comic books was under attack all over the western world, resulting in legislation that was eventually effective, at least for a time. But once television had appropriated much of the entertainment market, until then filled by films, radio and comic books, there occurred a curious kind of escalation of violence in which the main media components fed on one another to keep the cycle going.

Television in its first decade pre-empted all the innocuous forms of entertainment that once had been the role of certain family-type films. At the same time, it began to move in on another field occupied by films – entertainments generally based on crime or suspense – private detective programs, westerns, police dramas. But in all these entertainment areas television had a special status. It was in the home, for all ages to watch.

Therefore television began to write its own rules and enforce them through network standards offices that really, then and now, are censors.

Because television went straight into home living-rooms, even programs that had ultra-violent content had to depict their murders or beatings without actually dwelling much on tortured, mashed-to-a-pulp victims, pools of blood, heads or limbs blown off or smashed. Violence was accepted, but it was sanitized so that it would not offend the consumer.

Films, looking for a way to recover some of their lost audiences, took over the most explicit violence. This was something films could do because their audiences were paying customers in cinemas rather than captive families in living-rooms. Films therefore carved out a new and quite different constituency than their earlier one, when movies ruled the family entertainment world. When these films in turn were sold to television networks, even with cuts, their scenes tended to be more explicitly violent than material made especially for television. Violent language, long restricted to some kinds of prose fiction, spread to films at approximately the same speed as violent physical acts. With audiences increasingly conditioned to accept this escalation in film violence, television censors began to agonize over, and sometimes allow, language and physical actions that they would have rejected out of hand not many years before. All commercial media are in the same business – delivering audiences for advertisers. Newspapers and magazines, competing with television for the attention of those audiences, modified some of their rules regarding what they could and could not say in print. Books remained more or less independent of this interaction, as did popular music, mainly because they had very few limits on their freedom of expression in any case. But it is possible in these general terms and specific ones, if necessary, to state that television's escalation of violent content has drawn some other media into more reliance on (as in the case of film and magazines) or tolerance of (as in the case of newspapers) increasingly explicit violent content. This escalation continues wherever it has not been curbed by governmental action. Even when, under pressure from the government regulatory agency, major U.S.

networks united in the family-hour concept to clear prime evening time of excessive violent content, the escalation went on.

The constantly increasing flow of television violence on U.S. networks and Canadian private networks and private stations (the publicly owned Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has a better record), goes on at all hours, including times when children are watching. There is no doubt whatever, from the evidence from all sources, that this escalation is based on constant pressure to maximize audiences, in order to increase profits, – and is done without regard for the effects on the audiences. To put it explicitly, it is the result of placing profit above social responsibility. Any other industry that is proved to be, or even suspected of, putting profits above the public good is challenged by governments or the public and brought to account.

The Commissioners believe that in this Report will be found some material that qualifies as proof that a danger to society exists, and a much greater amount justifying deep suspicion that a wrong may be being done to the quality of life of this and future generations of Canadians. The counter-arguments are known: that even cleaning up Canadian media would not change the flow of violent material across the border from the United States; that denying Canadian television networks the right to buy violent U.S. television program at bargain-basement prices – a practice that leaves little room for Canadian material – would change Canadian television's profit picture to an extent that would lessen the amount of money available to develop Canadian programs; even the argument that if Canadians stopped aping the U.S. in what is produced here, audiences would be lost. But isn't the whole game being lost anyway, when Canadian airwaves are used to promulgate a violent culture that once was alien to us but now rapidly is becoming, if it has not already become, the culture of Canada as well?

When the Commissioners looked at the fourth instruction, "to make appropriate recommendations, if warranted . . ." the question had to be faced: is the situation dangerous enough to warrant the most spirited attempt to bring about change? We believe the answer is yes. We believe this because:



- *We find that the great weight of research into the effects of violent media content indicates potential harm to society.*
- *We find a constantly increasing flow of television violence at all hours, including those when children are watching, in a cynical attempt to maximize audiences.*
- *We find that television's escalation of violence is drawing other sections of the media along like the tail of a comet.*
- *We find that Canadians generally are watching more and more U.S.-made television with much higher levels of violence than that produced here or anywhere else.*
- *We find that the trend points to more media violence in the future, unless it is arrested now and turned back – even if only to the extent that we, as Canadians, can do so.*
- *We find that, while the total crime rate may increase or decrease marginally year by year, violent crime is constantly on the rise.*
- *We believe that, while increased exploitation and depiction of violence in the media is only one of the many social factors contributing to crime, it is the largest single variable most amenable to rectification.*
- *We are concerned to alert the public and governments to the danger, and the communications industry to its social responsibility.*
- *We do not believe in censorship but we do believe in providing more and better alternatives for public entertainment, information and education, and we believe that it is only just to demand accountability beyond the balance sheet from those who take a profit from communications.*
- *We also believe that the public generally supports the above conclusions and, further, that the communications industry will resist substantial changes unless the full weight of legislative and public opinion is brought to bear, not only on the general issue, but*

*on specific methods of eliminating the more flagrant of the potential dangers.*

Having reached these conclusions, we respond to our mandate to offer recommendations in order that citizens, governments and the communications industry can face and deal with a problem that has the power and potential to disrupt Canada's social, cultural and intellectual environments.

## Chapter Five

# The Recommendations

The basic philosophy behind the Commission's 87 recommendations is the Commissioners' conviction that the weight of both scientific research and public attitudes represents a widely based call for changes large and small within the communications industry, to make it more responsible and responsive to the long-term public interest. It is generally accepted that if anything is judged to be dangerous to an environment, its constant repetition or accumulation increases the likelihood of deleterious results. A fast-flowing river created the Grand Canyon. A buildup of mercury in a diet can make it injurious or even fatal. Air pollution is measured and factories are shut down when the pollution count is too high for public safety.

The same danger may be present when a massive diet of anti-social attitudes (as expressed, for instance, in heavy exposure to media-depicted violence) contributes to a decline in interpersonal acts and relationships that help cause violent crime in society.

The Commission's approach, therefore, is to reinforce the Canadian tradition of freedom of expression and creativity in the communications industry – but at the same time to demand a wider freedom of choice for the public, and also a greatly heightened dedication by the industry itself to higher quality and more attention to the public good. Freedom with accountability is the hallmark of democracy. Freedom with responsibility should not be an impossible goal. We believe from our two years of work that true media responsibility and accountability can lead to a higher level of freedom for all, the public as well as the media masters – although, so far, only the public appears to accept that idea 100 per cent. Putting the concept into effect may require a lot of time, thought and money. But the problem is urgent. Quality is always relative. Canadian quality – especially where it is most needed in the visual arts of television and film, which are dominated by the United States – has been spread far too thinly to prevent the cultural bleeding-to-death now well under way.

Because improving the effectiveness of the Canadian communications product has the connotation of making that product so good that it will reduce or exclude others by public choice,

the recommendations must go far beyond the product to the way it is produced. This has been done, especially with regard to the television and film industries, but also in the practice of journalism. Therefore:

- 1. The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry recommends wide-scale changes in present procedures to the end that the communications industry, by diminishing the exploitation of violence, will reflect more accurately the quality of life to which most Canadians aspire. In excluding censorship as a basis for achieving such change, we suggest a path that we believe will provide more and better alternatives for public entertainment and enlightenment, while demanding more accountability from those who take a profit from communications.**

The public perceives television to be the major area of concern. This is so partly because Canada's broadcasting system – closely modelled on that of the United States in programming style – has chosen in content as well to be, at best, imitative of the U.S. system and, at worst, identical. Especially on private television, many time slots are filled with U.S. programs, often violent. They can be bought much more cheaply than the best programs that can be produced in Canada. The way of least resistance has been to allow them to dominate Canadian private television and, to a lesser extent, the publicly owned CBC. By abdicating responsibility for so much of each program day, our broadcasting networks, CBC as well as private, have failed to provide the kind of service that fosters Canadian cultural values on a national scale.

- 2. Because failure in the practice and thrust of Canadian television presents Canadians with more television violence than any other country except Canadian television's mother-country, the United States, the Commission feels that a general inquiry into the future of Canadian broadcasting is urgently needed. Broadcasting requires restructuring, not only to reduce violent content, but in other ways as well, to make it more responsive to Canada's cultural identity. It is of prime importance that provision be made for public input in the discussion**

**of a matter so essential to the survival of a national culture – and perhaps the nation – that it should not be determined by governments alone behind closed doors.**

Although it is the Commission's impression from its U.S. consultations that a major reconstruction of the U.S. broadcast system would not now be possible, it is not quite too late in Canada. The Commissioners do believe that a revolution might be required to bring Canadian television back into the service of Canadians and under real Canadian control; Commission research papers, as well as detailed study of broadcasting systems in several European countries, may suggest, in whole or in part, alternatives to the present system.

Two forecasts are relevant here. One, drawn from a Commission research project, is that public funding of the CBC, now nearing \$500 million a year, will rise to \$2 billion annually over the next decade. Another is that the proliferation of cable systems throughout Canada, in the presence of new technology that will make even more rapid spread of cable feasible, is causing Canadian television, both public and private, to face a steady drain on its audience share, especially for Canadian-made programs in the richest markets.

What can be done to arrest this erosion of what was intended to be an instrument to promote national unity? Alternatives that the Commission believes merit consideration are the ARD system of West Germany, IBA in the United Kingdom, and NOS in The Netherlands. All are explored in the Foreign Consultations section of this volume. Also, the model of minimum requirements for national broadcasting drawn up by the Council of Europe details aims that apply in most respects to Canada.

From the Commission's studies, it is clear that, for cultural and identity reasons, there is a need – and it is feasible – to have a multi-channel system. Such a system would aim at a national standard of broadcasting, with provincial and regional input and provision for public representation, the whole to be independent and autonomous, responsible to Parliament and not to the government of the day.

- 3. Consequently, the Commission recommends a**

radically altered national television system, more sensitive to the needs of the public, including the diminution of depicted violence. The new system would eliminate existing Canadian broadcasting entities placing all Canadian television programming under public control of an organization to be called Television Canada/Télévision-Canada to serve all Canadians with a multi-channel, publicly directed cable system to include U.S. and other imported programs, but with a stricter control of violent content. It should offer a full range of programs in both official languages, on channels specialized for light entertainment (including comedy, variety and action programs), children's and youth programs (including cartoons and news), sports and films, news and public affairs, specialized regional and community programming, drama, music and documentaries. All programs other than news would be produced by, and purchased from, independent producers. News programming would be produced by Television Canada itself.

4. The Commission recommends that, under such a system, Parliamentary subsidies be phased out; annual user fees, at approximately the same level as present cable-user fees, and advertising revenues would finance the system.

The cost would be shifted from the taxpayer to the individual user at an acceptable rate that would provide a vastly diversified, more Canadian service in which anti-social content, including violence, would have to meet stringent standards of relevance to plot or story lines, or not be shown.

5. The Commission recommends that all television delivery systems (cable, public and private stations and networks) be combined under a corporation of mixed public and private ownership, called Tele-Distribution Canada/Télé-Distribution-Canada.

Tele-Distribution Canada would distribute the programming of Television Canada. The distributing company's board of directors would represent the shareholders (i.e., present facilities owners), so that about 75 per cent would represent, present network, private-station and cable-system owners and about 25 per cent would represent CBC's present ownership of broadcasting

hardware. The CBC representatives on the Tele-Distribution Canada board of directors would be named by the Parliamentary Broadcasting Committee.

6. The Commission recommends that Television Canada, the programming arm of such a new television structure, be completely independent and answerable only to Parliament.

7. The Commission recommends that a minister be charged with taking Television Canada's budget into Parliament and with appointing senior management of Television Canada on the nomination of Parliament.

8. The Commission recommends that the responsible minister be at liberty to give advice to Television Canada, but only if such advice is forthwith tabled in Parliament and published.

9. The Commission recommends that to decentralize control and make such a system more responsive to viewers and their real social imperatives – such as what models for behaviour are being shown – there be regional councils of volunteer listeners and viewers, for each official language, made up of nominees from interested groups. Each regional council would make nominations to Television Canada's Board of Directors, with such members to elect the chairman of the board.

10. The Commission recommends that all the foregoing be covered in a new Broadcasting Act, to re-define the primary purpose of Canadian television as an independent service in the enlightened public interest and to provide for a better balance in all program categories, truly reflecting not only high ethical standards, but also the cultural and regional diversity of Canada.

11. Recognizing that few Canadians would accept a monolithic approach to the broadcasting of news, the Commission recommends that the news mandate of Television Canada be to provide a basic objective news service only, with the necessary provision for diversity and dissent built in by use of mandatory periods for commentaries, features and other slants, from freelance journalists and



members of the public at large, or other relevant fields or professions. The aim: to give expression to all shades of perception and opinion, criticism or comment, on the main message of the news presentations.

This would provide a full news and comment package with a view to diversity, rather than a monolithic approach. Because research shows that more people get their news from television than from any other source, and because of the agenda-setting function (telling people what is important), the Commission believes that diversity is essential.

12. While such a massive overhaul of Canadian television is being planned and implemented, the Commission recommends that the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission be required to monitor program content, especially for violence and other anti-social acts, as part of its procedure for issuing or renewing licences to use the publicly owned airwaves.

The CRTC already exercises total control over engineering matters, but only limited control over content (the Canadian ratio and advertising). Can technical and engineering problems really be held to be of greater public importance than the material transmitted, when available knowledge indicates that some material is damaging to the public good? For example, if a television station regularly screens 40 murders a month in entertainment prime time, let the CRTC require it to justify such programming in terms of the public interest in which its licence was issued.

13. The Commission recommends that in the intervening period, Canadian broadcasters, especially the CBC, should be encouraged to commission out-of-house production from independent producers.

The purpose is to develop creative program capability in preparation for introduction of the new system.

14. Alternatively to the above recommendations, should the Government of Canada be unwilling to provide a broader, more responsible type of broadcasting system, the Commission recommends that the

Ontario government formulate a new provincial network based on TVOntario, emphasizing more regional autonomy, and negotiate with the other provinces toward setting up a system of coordinated provincial networks. In this connection, the Commission recommends the ARD system of West Germany, a system of connected/autonomous provincial networks.

15. The Commission recommends that the chief executive officer of Television Canada or, in the interim, of the CBC, should have a strong background in broadcasting or related creative fields, as well as in administration.
16. The Commission recommends that the Ontario government, through the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, empanel a group to devise a classification system to determine the suitability of television programs for children's viewing and set up an advisory system to assist parents and other viewers.

Such a classification system should be developed by calling upon expert consultants such as child psychologists and juvenile court judges, along with teachers, parents and widely representative groups concerned with the quality of family life. A variety of advisory systems exist: voice-over, subtitled warnings before some explicit scenes, or flashing symbols or lights used throughout some adult programs shown when children might be watching. A newer concept is an on-screen host who introduces and explains material that may prove offensive or harmful. The Commissioners envision standardization of such advisories so that they could also be published by use of a simple code: perhaps classified 4-V for most violent, graded down to 1-V for minimum violence.

17. The Commission recommends that such an advisory system, when developed, be adopted by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, which would require its implementation by all licensees and enforce its use by regular monitoring.
18. The Commission recommends an industry-wide ban

on advertising in all television children's programs, as is the case on the CBC and on TVOntario.

19. The Commission is aware of existing technology that would greatly help parents achieve more effective guidance and control over which television programs their children watch. The Commission recommends that inexpensive tuning and locking devices, which can be pre-set by parents to channel or to program, be further developed for attachment to home television sets.
20. The Commission recommends that such technological assistance be required by law to be standard on all Canadian sets sold after a certain date, as was done in the case of UHF receivers.
21. The Commission recommends that next-generation television sets also be made with a stereo reception capability and that Canadian-produced television programs and films thereafter be produced with FM stereo sound quality.
22. The Commission recommends the adoption of television transmission by the West German 625-line AEC-Telefunken PAL system, considered the best available, and the gradual phasing out of the current NTSC system.

Upon the adoption of colour telecasting, the United Kingdom phased into the PAL system. Every western European country except France has adopted it, as have more than a dozen other countries, including South Africa, the latest country to establish television broadcasting. France uses its own SECAM system, which has also been purchased by eastern European countries.

The adoption of the PAL system, along with the improved sound reception described in Recommendation 21, would give Canadians the best television picture and the best television sound available. The technical difficulties to be encountered in such a phasing-in, and the additional care in telecasting in FM-stereo, are not under-estimated.

23. The Commission recommends that the CRTC rigorously enforce adherence by cable-television

licensees to their obligations to provide community access to their program channels; to publicize more widely the availability of community channels to those who wish access; and to provide facilities and production staff to assist members of the public who wish to present their own programs on such channels.

24. The Commission recommends that the newly established film archive within the National Archives be broadened and expanded to provide an independent National Broadcast Archive of selected news and Canadian broadcast programming, whether initially produced by public or private broadcast entities, to facilitate current and future research, and to preserve this record of contemporary Canadian society.

Broadcasting and the film industry share many interrelated problems, not the least of which is finding enough money to produce quality programs that can compete with imported American material. Sources of government financial aid to the Canadian film industry are meagre enough; what is worse is that such aid is scattered through federal, provincial and municipal governments and agencies, and it follows no coherent common policy. There is only minimal provision for assistance in training the artists and technicians, the writers and directors who can give expression to Canada in today's medium – film. Although Canadians are among the world's most avid film-goers and television consumers, most of what they see was made for others. Canadian distribution systems have not developed. Films are distributed in Canada largely through branch plants of U.S. film producers, whose primary interest is the sale of their own product. Canadian exhibition houses are overwhelmingly foreign-owned, and the negotiated quota systems for exhibition of Canadian films is inadequate.

European countries are aware that domestic film production is more than just a business, although that is important. The cultural enrichment of their peoples through film material that mirrors their own lives and problems has long been accepted as worthy of government financial

support. Aid to national film industries in Europe takes many forms: grants given at the earliest stages of script development, including travel and research; financial assistance to the producer in putting together his package of script, stars, director and technicians; assistance in the actual costs of production – in some cases of special merit, more than 75 per cent of those costs; assistance of various kinds toward domestic and foreign distribution and exhibition. Quality prizes and bonuses for exhibition of films of merit are common. There are some systems of automatic government aid, where a portion of special movie box-office levies, dependent upon the success of the film, is paid over after exhibition to a producer. Automatic systems of recent years have given way to selective aid. Financial assistance is given to films of merit produced primarily for domestic audiences. Those who choose to produce film of little merit, usually exploiting sex and/or violence and horror, are left to find their own financing.

The Commission finds that Canada is impoverished by piecemeal and uncoordinated film aid to its nascent film industry, which needs nourishment so that Canadians can have access to this means of expression.

As far as can be learned, artistic merit takes a distant second place in Canada to the simple question: will it sell? This to-hell-with-quality bent of the Canadian Film Development Corporation has resulted in the production of some commercially successful trash, some not commercially successful, but only rarely and almost by accident has it brought about a product of real merit in Canadian or any other terms. Canadian filmmakers would like to be a flourishing element in the national culture, but some of the best have found they must go elsewhere to find work in their profession – as often as not, work that enriches some other nation's artistic or entertainment reputation, or coffers.

25. Because the making of Canadian films is of paramount importance not only to the cinemas but in supplying Canadian material for television, the Commission recommends establishment of an organization called Film Canada that would incorporate the existing film institutions such as the

National Film Board and the Canadian Film Development Corporation, archives and libraries. Film Canada would coordinate, with other levels of government and their agencies, a truly coherent film-aid policy.

26. The Commission recommends that Film Canada be answerable to Parliament for policy and budget, with responsibility for encouraging and financing growth of a Canadian film industry that would aim for excellence.
27. The Commission recommends that Film Canada's board of directors be nominated by the provinces and Parliament, chosen with regard to appropriate cultural and linguistic balance from among people with a proven record in the business side of the arts.
28. The Commission recommends that the first task of the board of Film Canada should be to hire competent management from among Canadians who have worked consistently in Canada or have had to go elsewhere to be active filmmakers, and only secondarily from among experienced film executives of other nations.
29. The Commission recommends that Film Canada's directors and management then formulate and follow a coherent film-aid policy with cooperative financing from federal and provincial governments. The policy aim should be to reinforce government and private institutions where possible – or to replace them where necessary – in order to stimulate and encourage the growth of an independent Canadian film industry.
30. The Commission recommends that the financing arm of Film Canada be specifically directed to carry out a policy designed to develop, in the film medium, Canadian cultural and entertainment excellence, with the emphasis on development of the cinema art, rather than on seeking a banker-like return for each item of financial support.
31. While the Commission envisions Film Canada as a national umbrella organization, it also recommends the widest possible physical decentralization of facilities for training, production, financing, post-production, (dubbing, music, subtitles), exhibition



and distribution, the ideal being working locations in every region of Canada.

32. The Commission, recognizing the shortage of experienced writers for television and film, recommends the establishment and financing of writers' training programs to develop Canadian talent in that field.
33. The Commission recommends that Film Canada provide financial support for and coordination of schools and workshops (some of which already exist) to train actors, directors and technicians in both television and film.
34. The Commission recommends that Film Canada negotiate with Canadian television programmers to design joint projects to give public showings of experimental new productions on a regular basis to advance the effective development of writers, actors and directing personnel.
35. The Commission recommends a strong policy in Film Canada of financing worthwhile films – not including those that exploit violence, horror, and sex – from the idea level through to final editing, including grants for script-writing, travel and research, toward making usable products for both cinemas and television. This financing would be by way of a flexible, selective system including grants, loans and guarantees, and assistance in the promotion, distribution and exhibition of the film product.
36. The Commission recommends that the wholly controlled production arm of Film Canada (the National Film Board) leave adult feature films to private film production companies that are bound to flourish under such a liberalized support policy, and concentrate on documentaries, shorts, children's films and animation, for both cinema use and television.
37. The Commission recommends institution of a dubbing and subtitling post-production facility to serve both Canadian official languages, and maintenance of a pool of expert actors. This facility should also be responsible for the adaptation of foreign films for Canadian use and for print production and other required processes.

Dubbing is a specialized skill, demanding the talents of experienced professionals. At present, Canadian productions in either official language are rarely available to audiences of the other language group. The Commission believes that Canadian films should be accessible to all Canadians through the use of dubbing or subtitling and that foreign films produced in languages other than English or French should also be accessible to Canadians through the use of these processes.

38. The Commission recommends the founding by Film Canada of a distribution facility to ensure wide availability in Canada and abroad of all Canadian films, however financed.

The National Film Board has a film distribution system to handle sales abroad, but in Canada distribution of Canadian films, including those of the NFB, is primarily in the hands of self-interested subsidiaries of U.S. film production houses, themselves controlled by U.S. conglomerates.

39. The Commission recommends Film Canada's purchase of an existing major chain of cinemas, Famous Players, to ensure wide exhibition for Canadian films.

Such an exhibition facility would not only ensure the showing of Canadian films but would exhibit films originating in other countries so that Canadians would have access to the widest choice of movie fare from whatever source.

40. The Commission recommends that Film Canada be made responsible for much more active promotion of Canadian films than has ever been the case, and also for the promotion and sales of Canadian films abroad, including exhibition at film festivals.
41. The Commission recommends that Film Canada establish a truly national film library and archive, in consultation and cooperation with existing national and provincial film institutes and like organizations.
42. The Commission recommends that Canadian film and broadcast producers direct more of their talents



to the production of children's films and television programs.

The Commissioners believe that children's films and television programs have not been accorded the interest or encouragement warranted. Although there are greater cultural differences to be considered in producing children's programs than in producing those for adults, such problems can be overcome to provide a rich variety, not only for domestic consumption but also for world-wide distribution.

43. The Commission recommends that techniques be developed and applied to make films and television programs more accessible to the deaf and others who are perpetually or physically handicapped.
44. The Commission believes that for the print media to achieve accountability beyond the balance sheet, changes will be required that can be best accomplished within a statutory framework. Accordingly, the Commission recommends that a national Freedom of Expression Act be written specifically to outlaw pre-censorship by government authority of all public communications, either broadcast or printed. The Act would also define the limits of free expression: libel, obscenity, breach of the Official Secrets Act, matters affecting the defence of Canada, treason, sedition, or promulgating information that leads to incitement of crime or violence.
45. The Commission recommends that this Act be embedded in the Canadian Constitution when it is patriated, to take precedence over existing provincial and federal statutes.
46. To ensure watchdog protection for the public and the communications industry under the Freedom of Expression Act, the Commission recommends institution of a national Media Council representing both the communications industry and the public, on a statutory basis, headed by a National Media Ombudsman, to receive and act upon complaints of contravention of the Freedom of Expression Act, and to protect that freedom from attack.
47. The Commission recommends that the national Media Council be set up in line with procedural recommendations stemming from a national conference of organizations concerned with the quality of Canadian life, especially those that do not feel the mass media are properly filling their real or implied mandate to contribute constructively to the Canadian social environment.
48. The Commission recommends that the Council and its head, the national Media Ombudsman, be funded by Parliament and be responsible to Parliament and not to the government of the day.
49. The Commission recommends that the national Media Ombudsman be an outstanding Canadian, probably with judicial background but, in any event, with a reputation for fairness and responsiveness, because the purpose of the position is to protect the principle of free expression in all media and to protect the public from media excesses.
50. The Commission recommends that the national Media Council write and enforce a code of ethics emphasizing the four main elements of news responsibility: fairness, accuracy, relevance and completeness.
51. To make such a council more directly responsive to public complaints, the Commission recommends that each broadcasting outlet, newspaper or periodical be required to nominate a responsible editor or other senior executive who could be called

The conference would include representatives of the communications industry as well as of organizations involved in civil liberties, human rights, social welfare, labour, education, law enforcement, medicine and other relevant professions or organizations that already have frequent contacts, some for purposes of criticism, with the media.

Canadian precedents for the appointment of an officer responsible to Parliament rather than to the government of the day exist in the practices followed in the appointments of the Federal Chief Electoral Officer and Auditor General; and in Ontario of the Provincial Ombudsman and the chairman of the Committee on Election Contributions and Expenses.

to account for any offence against the Freedom of Expression Act or breach of the code of ethics.

52. The Commission recommends that a public debate be held to reach consensus on whether the right to conceal sources should be accorded to newsmen; this discussion could perhaps begin at the conference recommended in Recommendation 47. If opinion favours such a right (which exists in several other countries), the Commission recommends that it be embedded in the Freedom of Expression Act, bearing in mind the importance of achieving better professional journalistic standards in the presentation of news, whether print or electronic.

53. The Commission recommends that the national Media Ombudsman have the power to order publication or broadcast of retractions or corrections with a prominence equal to the original item, when such action is found appropriate.

54. The Commission recommends that the national Media Council publish its judgments as a form of accumulating jurisprudence on media practices, for reference and study.

55. The Commission recommends that the national Media Council be empowered to receive complaints about all media, including films, song lyrics on records and as broadcast by radio, comic books, and media coverage of live theatre and concerts.

56. The Commission recommends that complaint procedures be cost-free to the complainant and that the national Media Council set up a nationwide system to receive complaints.

57. Because of the radical nature of such a change in the conditions under which the Canadian media operate, the Commission recommends that the Act and all procedures dependent on it be reviewed before being embedded in the Constitution.

58. The Commission recommends that the provinces take steps to appoint statutory provincial press councils and media ombudsmen if the federal government fails to do so.

59. The Commission recommends that the provinces establish institutes in Canadian universities in each region of Canada to conduct and regularly publish research into mass media effects and the place of mass media in Canadian culture.

60. The Commission recommends that news industries and universities work together to expand and reinforce a more professional approach to journalism, including a mandatory training system along the lines of the on-the-job apprenticeship now required in Ontario for teachers, social workers, students of law and medicine.

The aim would be to have those intending to make a profession of journalism work for certain set periods in newsrooms. Part of the time would be spent in learning the philosophy and provisions of the Freedom of Expression Act, gaining knowledge of Canada and the world, and absorbing the basics of news presentation – fairness, accuracy, relevance and completeness – along with a thorough grounding in the legal restraints, such as libel and contempt, that now apply to journalism.

61. The Commission recommends that such a professional development system be supported by provincial governments, perhaps under departments of education, as are training techniques for teachers and social workers – two professions to which, the Commission's research showed, many journalists liken themselves and their role in society.

62. The Commission recommends that newspaper and magazine publishers, as well as broadcasters and filmmakers, familiarize themselves with current social research on the impact of the media, including the depiction of violence, and measure performance against what is known of the potential effect on social behaviour, guarding against promulgating material injurious to the physical or mental health of the public.

This would include consideration of the impact of print or broadcast news on violent events in which the media are used by the perpetrators of violence to further their own ends. Regular non-crisis liaison between media and police forces for infor-

mation purposes and possible action might obviate situations where police feel that media activities exacerbate already difficult situations. Police forces, on their part, should designate high-level officers to supply accurate information during and after such action.

- 63. The Commission recommends that all news media review their performance in putting events into proper context – meaning that reports should contain relevant backgrounding so they enhance, rather than confuse, public understanding.**

Because newspapers particularly tend to play up violent crimes such as rapes or murders in which the victims are not known to the criminals, there is a well-documented public belief that most murders are committed by people who do not know their victims. The truth is opposite: most murders and rapes involve people who are acquainted. Most rapes take place in the home of the rapist or the victim, and most real violence takes place in families. News media treatment has caused the public to believe that such places as parking garages, parks, dark streets and subways, are the principal sites for such crimes, when that is not the case at all.

- 64. The Commission recommends that publishers and broadcasters devise news reports or summaries specifically directed to children's needs, and thus counter the pronounced drift of young people away from the traditional methods of learning about world events.**

Research indicates that few children read newspapers or watch or listen to broadcast news. Major European and American broadcast systems that have tailored news segments especially for children have gained high audiences.

- 65. The Commission recommends that the Ontario government encourage the development of public and high school courses on mass media, and the addition of new instruction designed to promote media literacy at all school levels – public and high school, university and extension class programs – and the use of media as part of literature and history courses.**

Our intent is not that these be professionally oriented courses, but that they be designed to promote better understanding of individual media biases, political and commercial, and to enhance public ability to digest the media diet – for instance, to do so without accepting as truth everything they see, hear or read. The dominant medium of our time is the film, on television or in cinemas; it is as appropriate to study that medium as it is to study print.

- 66. While the Commission heard dozens of criticisms of violence in televised hockey, our examination of the subject indicated that the Canadian Sports Network, which owns broadcast rights, follows a policy of covering a violent incident on-air only as it happens. Directors are instructed to show replays only to the point where the violence began, to inform the audience how it started. The Commission recommends that this policy be continued, but that in situations seen by the director as being excessively violent, on-air shots be selected that do not cover the violence directly, using the delay before a normal replay to decide how much of the actuality should be shown.**
- 67. The Commission recommends that the Ontario government make its TVOntario network province-wide, to provide wider choice to the taxpayers who support it, particularly because TVO excels in non-violent programming.**
- 68. The Commission recommends that TVOntario expand its outlying production facilities so that input from communities throughout the province, particularly in the Far North, is more readily incorporated into its programming.**
- 69. The Commission recommends that adult film censorship be abolished in Ontario, and that a Film Classification Board be appointed to classify films by age levels for children and youth.**
- 70. The Commission recommends that the Film Classification Board comprise a small professional group assisted by rotating panels of interested volunteers drawn from different parts of the province and with expert consultants called upon as needed.**

The Commission would prefer film classification on a national basis, either by a Canadian classification office or by consultation between classification officers from province to province, with a view to providing a national standard that also would apply to films shown on television and on Canadian airlines.

71. The Commission recommends that films be classified in Ontario on the basis of their themes, especially in regard to anti-social content. One category, open to anyone, should present sex only within the terms of a loving relationship; violence only when demonstrably in the service of maintaining law and order; with right and wrong clearly defined and the broadly practised social mores unchallenged. A second category, open to anyone above age 12, should allow social themes beyond the normal comprehension of children, but should portray sex outside the context of loving relationships only as a secondary theme. In this category explicit sex should be seen only in the confines of loving interaction; violence should never be preferred as a problem-solving choice; clear definitions of right and wrong should be offered. The third category, for those 18 and over, should be specifically adult in concept, counting on the ability of adults to distinguish between right and wrong, perhaps challenging social, sexual and violence mores, but never in a gratuitous, excessive way unrelated to the needs of the film. In this category there would be no restriction of admissions for anyone 18 or over. All film classifying would be subject to an appeal procedure by the producer or distributor.

72. The Commission recommends that the Ontario government devise a system to enforce the spirit of film classification by regular checks on cinema audiences.

There should be enforcement of age limits described by the classification process.

73. The Commission recommends that the Film Classification Board's mandate include classification of all promotional material, including television and cinema trailers, newspaper and radio

advertisements, with mandatory inclusion of film classifications in all such material.

74. The Commission recommends that the Ontario government devise a model by-law for municipal control of the operation of drive-in theatres, to diminish incidence of young viewers watching films not suited to their age groups.

75. The Commission recommends that the Ontario government negotiate with the other provinces to seek a uniform system of film classification across the country.

While community standards may vary in a country with such a diverse cultural, economic, social and geographic makeup, television and film material that is hazardous to the well-being of children and youth in one part of Canada will have the same effect on them in other parts.

76. The Commission recommends that the Ontario government require screening textbooks for content that does psychological violence or provides violent role models.

77. The Commission recommends that Canadian airlines screen in-flight movies, having regard to the fact that violent and other anti-social content in films shown may not be suitable for young persons in the captive audience.

78. The Commission recommends that television scheduling of films reflect the Film Classification Board's age code, to the effect that unsuitable films not be broadcast at times when children might be watching.

79. The Commission recommends that no licensing of new broadcast technology, including pay-TV, be permitted by any agency of government at any level, until its impact on the future Canadian broadcast policy can be ascertained.

80. The Commission recommends that all levels of government promote public understanding of the findings of scientific research regarding the effects of media content, with a view to making the public



**more critical and selective in its media consumption.**

This might be done by including promotional material in federal government mailings of Family Allowances and pensions, and in similar provincial and municipal mailings.

- 81. As a corollary to the above and considering the seriousness of the subject, the Commission recommends that a government-supported mass media publicity and advertising campaign be established, similar to those already conducted for such issues as the status of women, construction safety, alcohol abuse, and tobacco addiction.**

This one, focused on media violence, would state the issues and the dangers as do the other campaigns, and then leave it up to the individual to act. Or not act.

- 82. The Commission recommends that all the above recommendations be carried out by appropriate levels of government, industry or society, but that, in any case where the federal government does not act in matters under its jurisdiction, the Ontario government does so to the full extent of its own power.**

The Commission recognizes that one of the most deeply sought goals of parents is to influence the moral, as well as the physical, development of their children and that this need is deepened by the eroded influence of the church and school on today's youngsters. The Commissioners also understand that it is impracticable for parents to monitor every moment of their children's media intake. Media spokesmen who insist that parents are totally responsible for what their children see or hear are simply avoiding their own role in today's unsatisfactory media diet. The recommendations recognize, however, that parents have some part to play and that many are eager to do so. They are a response to the cries for help we heard from people and are meant to assist them in exercising their responsibility.

- 83. The Commission recommends that parents take an**

**active role with respect to their children's media diet.**

Research makes it clear that parents can lessen the potentially harmful impact of the media, especially television, by pointing out those themes, ideas or actions that violate the family's own standards. Parents should:

- wherever possible, treat television as a shared activity in which the adult provides guidance and safety (in much the same way responsible mothers and fathers insist on accompanying their small children through dangerous traffic)
- at the very least, make sure they know what their children are watching by sampling programs seen regularly by the child (sitcoms, action and police dramas, sporting events)
- discuss selections with the children so they understand parental approval or disapproval of a program's content
- understand and be guided by advisory or classification systems as these are instituted
- give serious attention to the number of hours and overall quality of their children's television consumption.

The purpose of parental supervision of television is to guarantee each child a balanced life and the development of a wholesome value system incorporating reading, playing and creativity, as well as the ingestion of television.

- 84. The Commission recommends that parents read movie advertisements, reviews and classifications carefully to learn about films their children plan to see.**

The responsibility for supervising the youngster's media intake doesn't change with the size of the screen.

- 85. The Commission recommends that parents insist that cinemas adhere to the law governing the**

**admission of children to adult, restricted or otherwise classified films.**

In order to ensure the greatest amount of freedom in film choice for adults, parents will have to make certain that youngsters are protected from movies that are inappropriate and potentially damaging.

**86. The Commission recommends that the public take an active interest in the groups recommended in this report.**

All boards recommended by the Commission offer the possibility of greater individual input, but will not be effective unless they are supported by a concerned and informed citizenry. While anxieties about Canada's future continue to be a real problem, people must be aware that the danger of cultural invasion from outside is as severe as ever. If there is no will to have a Canadian culture, nor understanding of the importance of Canadian industries such as film and television that speak to Canadian experience and outlook, there will be no Canada.

**87. The Commission recommends that in furtherance of Recommendation 59, its research library, all relevant supporting material, public briefs and surveys, be deposited with a degree-granting Ontario institution. Factors such as accessibility to and by the community, scholars and the media should be borne in mind, as well as the willingness of such an institution to develop programs that will fully utilize this material.**

**The Commission recommends an annual provincial grant be provided in order to ensure the maintenance and development of this unique collection.**

To bring these recommendations back to the terms of this Commission's mandate, we believe that however it is done, there is an urgent need for broad public discussion of the possibility, and potential value, of making substantial changes in that part of our environment that has to do with the mind.

Governments, the communications industry, teachers, parents, children – almost everybody has

gone along all but unaware of the effects of the media, including the possible harm to each of us.

Two years of work and 87 recommendations by one Royal Commission are not the end of the matter.

In fact, this Commission must be seen as a beginning – a way of examining a complex aspect of the environment and its effect on society. This Report offers an opportunity for the people of this province – and of Canada – to make up their own minds about what they want of the media and how they can get what they want.

The end of the matter rests with them.

# **A Selection from the Briefs**

# A Selection from the Briefs

Some of the most elaborate and detailed briefs comprised surveys and studies conducted by educational groups, teachers and students, at both elementary and secondary schools and several were of close-to-professional quality. Because they often went over ground covered in depth by professional researchers, they are not reprinted here. A list and summary of some of these extremely helpful projects begins on page 346.

Many personal and group submissions by the public were of such superior quality or impact or made such interesting points or so clearly represented widely-held opinions, we made a selection from them. They appear, either in part or in full, starting on this page and are representative, we believe, of the thrust of the submissions presented to us. Finally, in recognition of the interest of all who responded to the Commission, a list of those who presented written briefs or notice of oral briefs begins on page 350.

One function of any Royal Commission with public involvement is to become a forum in which all citizens are equal in their right to be heard. This was sometimes seen by excellent speakers who knew their topics well as an opportunity to stand up without texts or extensive notes and lay out the truth as they saw it. Such a speaker was John Bassett, principal officer of Canada's most-watched private station, Toronto's CFTO-TV, which is also the flagship station of CTV, Canada's major private network and the North American network with the highest ratio of violence, according to Royal Commission research. His remarks, basically antagonistic to the idea of any authority but his own in matters of content at his station, were made without a printed text. Professor George Gerbner, Dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, also spoke extemporaneously, his subject based on his group's government-funded television-violence profile, a staple ingredient in all studies of the subject in the 1970s. Dr. Robert Liebert, professor of psychology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, showed a split-screen film he had made of children watching programs, with their reactions, recorded by hidden camera. He spoke of the inundation of violence on television and its effect on youngsters.

Moses Znaimer of Toronto's CITY-TV also spoke



without notes as did filmmaker Ron Kelly and actor Al Waxman. Others by the dozens, less well-known – from a Hydro worker in Cornwall to native Canadians in North Bay and Moose Factory Island to a social worker in Ottawa – spontaneously registered their opinions.

But by far the greatest proportion who spoke at hearings did so from prepared texts.

## **Shirley B. McClure** **Thunder Bay**

### **Violence in English Courses in the Secondary Schools of Ontario**

I am greatly concerned about some of the books used in the English courses in the secondary schools of Ontario.

Following is a list of books which I have encountered to which I object:

*In Cold Blood* – Truman Capote

A detailed study of some sensational murders in the United States.

*Butterfly Revolution* – Butler

Story of a children's camp where the campers are indoctrinated in revolutionary procedures and finally kill.

*Lord of the Flies* – Golding

Story of a group of children marooned on an island. Their cruel and sadistic behaviour is graphically detailed.

*The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* – Richler

While not exactly falling into the category of violence, it displays an attitude, common to many other books, that anything goes as long as a person realizes his goals. One parent exclaimed that if this book had been written by a Gentile, it would have been banned as anti-Semitic hate literature.

There are other books I could mention which don't exactly contain violence but which leave such a feeling of hopelessness about life that one could wonder if it were worth living. I am concerned about the fact that, in all these books, the standard reaction to any problem or frustration is a violent outburst of filthy and profane language, sometimes accompanied by physical abuse of the person deemed responsible.

It is obvious to most parents that children, even teenagers, are affected by the television which they watch. Little is known of the effect of the printed word. In discussions, most persons have stated that the printed word has little or no effect on the student. If this is the case, why have non-Christian parents been able to have two or three minutes of Bible reading and the Lord's Prayer removed from the schools on the grounds that their children were being unduly influenced to the Christian religion?

What is two or three minutes daily compared to two or three weeks of intensive study needed to pass an examination?

It is a known fact that with the advent of television, few students read much any more. What a shame that the little reading they do in school only backs up the violent attitudes seen on television.

The whole outlook of the English program in some grades is very depressing – for example: the unit headings in Grade 11 are:

#### Unit A. Breakdown

*Flowers for Algernon* two weeks

*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

*I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*

*Lisa, Bright and Dark*

*Tell Me That You Love Me, Junie Moon*

student read one of

*Catcher in the Rye* one week

*Nobody Waved Good-bye*

*Demian*

*The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*

student read one of

#### Unit B. Welcome to Disillusionment

*A Separate Peace* Knowles three weeks

*The Glass Menagerie* Williams two weeks

*Death of a Salesman* Miller two weeks

Some of the books (*Lord of the Flies*, *Catcher in the Rye*, *Butterfly Revolution*), are set in our own times, supposedly written by a young person, and therefore, could be quite influential because there is no cushion of time or place to dull the edges. There seems to be no uplifting literature on the course to show that students can and do rise above the problems and frustrations of everyday life without resorting to violence or breaking down.

English in Ontario is a compulsory subject. There is some dispute about whether or not the student has a choice of book. The teachers say, yes, a choice is offered; the students say, no, they have to approach the teacher for an alternate. In one Grade 11 class the choice was between *Duddy Kravitz* and *In Cold Blood*. In another, *Catcher in the Rye* was required study, but if a student objected, he could study *Great Expectations*, the heaviest of the Dickens' books, on his own. Besides having unrealistic choices, the student is

forced to make a spectacle of himself in asking for a different book. No student should have to face that.

Some English teachers say they would rather not teach *Catcher in the Rye*, for example, but that they have no choice themselves.

The courses of study from the Ministry of Education contain no guidelines for texts to be used. The choice lies with the Head of the English Department in each school, subject to approval of the Board of Education. The Board usually approves every book list handed to it, regardless of objections to any book on it.

I suggest that by having such books as required study in the schools, the Board of Education is giving its tacit approval to the unnecessary amounts of vulgarity and violence seen on the streets and in the various forms of the communications media.

I suggest that the Commission make a recommendation to the Ministry of Education that it set a definite course of study for English with a list of approved texts for each unit of study.

*Mrs. Shirley B. McClure*

## **Natalia Bril Niagara Falls**

### **Right, Wrong or Indifferent Value on Violence**

In a way I am glad to live in today's time and ages. We have a very good excuse for almost everything. If we hide our heads in the sand deep enough and we managed to stop all the violence on all of the news media, whom will we be able to blame for all of the human failing today?

One of the cruelest violence that I know of (I read it in the local newspaper) happened here in Niagara Falls a few weeks ago. One woman was arrested for a \$5.00 fine. At first she paid \$45.00 but as the police later remember another \$5.00 which she justifiably questioned and refused to pay on the spot. Jail for her. . .

What a value do we put on human dignity. . .

At least on the television you always have the good that win over the bad. So violence on the television is not so bad.

American violence on television is always wrong. But when it is the same violence on Canadian television as a rerun, then is it all right?

Modern cartoons are violent, would it be less violent if we have something from the Bible? Even the story of the old, old, Good Samaritan ends all right. How did it start?

Do we consider violence only as something that we don't like at the time, or is it violence in spite of who do it and when?

If we go only a little bit in our history, if you won you were just and good. If you lost you were bad and violent.

What about religions? Some did and still do offer human sacrifice. For those that were sacrificed it was very, very violent. For those that did give the sacrifice it was divine. One way or the other, the sacrifice was dead.

A bomb exploded near Caroline Kennedy, everybody said this is violence. A researcher for cancer cure is killed. How many remember his name? Too bad . . . Value on violence. . .

If any politician is assassinated, that is violence. If he happened to keep millions of people in slavery is that for nice law and order?

Before World War II as far as I know there was

not any television. A few radios here and there, some newspapers, as a rule not very much of news media. (After all, you believe only half of what you see, and hardly anything of what you hear.) Anyway the war somehow just happened. After all everybody kept repeating themselves: "We don't want a war." (It was not a matter of what we wanted, it was a matter of what we got.) Even Hitler kept saying he wanted peace. So he took a piece here, and a piece there, and did he not have even with Russia a peace pact? (The pact was to last forever.) So if some of the people did stand in his way violently, what was he to do? He was all for his own law and order as for murdering millions and millions of people and also countless prisoners of war. He did not exactly do it himself. He had many to keep his law and order. Like so many before and after him, not any need for any television.

Theoretically was that perfect law and order?

Practically was that not human violence?

Before I forget, please define the old custom of wife beating, was it good discipline or violence? As for women being soft. Bah. In most instances we are very, very vengeful. Eventually we will one way or another get even. . .

Government control is getting out of hand internationally. Every level of any government has so much control, that we have virtually a police state already. Do we need more? I think not!

If you want to buy a gun and you could not, but you still want to get somebody, you could always make a little Molotov cocktail and by accident get more people than you intended in the first place.

If all this sounds very sarcastic I am sorry, but I have seen all this, not as a movie on film or television or only read it in some news media. I have seen all this in real life. I did not see only one or two murders, I have seen quite a few. I did not see one kind of violence, I have seen too many different kinds of violence in real life.

Our main problem is, we never seem to be able to find a happy medium. We always have to go from one extreme to another. Where will censorship end and a complete dictatorship control take over? In many instances this is already so, but we are too busy with so much nonsense to notice, and unwilling to see.

If all levels of every government must answer

for everything that they do, they should be not only responsible (which they are not) but also answerable for all their actions. Then and only then could we make everybody else responsible and answerable.

If only all governments contribute as much for the good and the creative as much as they contribute for the corrupt and the destructive, then we would be in a better state.

History keeps repeating itself. It seems that we are unable to learn from our past mistakes. It is so much easier busying ourselves with self-deception, and to say after: "We did not know, we only did our jobs."

My really and truly conclusion is: I am worried and scared because all this was and is true facts of life.

As the saying goes: "Who cares until it is too late?"

*Mrs. Natalia Bril*

## **Kapuskasing and District Association for the Mentally Retarded Kapuskasing**

We, as members of the Kapuskasing and District Association for the Mentally Retarded, and as concerned citizens, feel that the upsurge in violence on television, in movies and, even in some newspaper and magazines, cannot improve the character or behaviour of mentally retarded individuals. Although our main concern in presenting a brief to this Commission is to help the mentally retarded, most of what follows applies to 'normal' children as well and so we feel that this submission applies universally where innocent minds are involved.

Unfortunately, most of our criticism is levelled at the medium of television. One must pay to enter a movie and usually when a retarded person attends he is well supervised and taken to valuable entertainment. Also, newspapers and magazines do not often interest the mentally retarded beyond looking at the pictures. Television, however, has become a part of modern life and is with us in our homes whether we like it or not.

Broadcasting in all its forms is required to serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity. Thus, television should meet the needs and desires of the majority of viewers, but, in fact, does not do this. We feel that the CBC both French and English language, and CTV, as far as children's programs are concerned should be commended. The talent that lies behind such programs as *Mr. Dressup*, *The Polka Dot Door*, *Nic et Pic*, et cetera, does its utmost to develop the whole child and inculcate sound moral standards. However, two problem areas relating to violence occur – even within the children's programming. First, the commercials in prime time family viewing or actual children's programs: often these advertisements show the most violent and revolting scenes of movies at local theatres or on later television movies or adult programs. Is this really necessary? Does this fulfill the needs and desires of the viewer?

Second, the programming of the violent emissions – the time the local networks choose to air certain programs. It is fairly obvious that 'family' viewing time would be from 4 p.m. to 8 or 9 p.m. Yet we are constantly bombarded with



tasteless 6 o'clock movies by the local CBC station or *Sunday Night Movies* (7 p.m.) such as *The French Connection* by the CTV network. Oddly enough a beautiful family program such as *The Nature of Things* is shown at 10 p.m. Perhaps we should be attacking the sponsors who air the mindless fluff, distorted violence and narrow view of life that we see daily.

A mentally retarded individual imitates what he sees. Therefore, we must be certain that impressionable, innocent minds are not subjected to debilitating and destructive influences.

Is there any way that these television networks could competitively air good entertainment for the whole family especially from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.? Most mentally retarded children and adults return from school or work and are exposed to television within these hours. Can our programs not somehow be entertaining and challenging, inspiring and invigorating, to assist the mind of a youth in developing its full potential?

Kapuskasing and District Association for the Mentally Retarded does not want to be completely negative in its approach to this problem. We have some positive suggestions. We feel that television, more so than any other media, is a huge cultural force. Perhaps if some of the commercialism were removed, so too would some of the violence that seems to be thriving. We all have a responsibility to the future of our society and must insure minimum standards for broadcasting.

We admit the fault does not all lie with the television programs. Many parents abuse television. Children are left alone and television is used to keep them out of the way. A young child, particularly a retarded child, can easily misinterpret what he sees and without some explanation the child's view of the world can be distorted. But even a responsible, conscientious parent must battle the programmer and constantly monitor emissions. This becomes a demanding task with the only viable alternative – turning the television off.

But, we as an Association feel that the medium of television can be a very positive force. It does not have to be destructive or frightening. With the cooperation of producers, sponsors and networks we could have high quality, useful and needed

programs. These programs could be aimed at different levels of conceptual ability and different informational needs. If a mentally retarded person were exposed to this type of entertainment perhaps we could make him a happier and more productive citizen.

Our Association would like to thank this Royal Commission for affording us the opportunity to air this brief. We close with this quotation from a book aptly named *Action for Children's Television*, p. 53:

Human dignity is a race between education and catastrophe. No one would argue that broadcasting alone will determine how the race ends. No one would deny that broadcasting has a vital duty to play and it must discharge that duty faithfully if the race is to be won.

Let us hope that this brief in some small way and this Commission in a large way will help us win the race.

Linda Giroux  
First Vice-President

## **Trevor Thomas Kitchener**

Although affiliated with two organizations in this community, as a private individual I would appreciate the opportunity to address the Commission at the meeting of April 2, 1976 in the Kitchener Public Library.

In order that we might engage in meaningful dialogue at the meeting, I am providing you with an outline of the major points on which I would like to speak.

As Executive Director of Mental Health/-Waterloo Region, I am very concerned by the manner in which some aspects of the news media report crimes of violence. My concern lies around the inclusion of statements such as "...a former mental patient", "...recently released from a psychiatric hospital", and "...escaped from a psychiatric hospital" when reporting individual acts of aggression. The inclusion of these statements leads to a perpetuation of the myths that people who have received psychiatric care are dangerous and violent. Research has shown that individuals who have received psychiatric assistance are less likely to commit a crime of violence than someone who has not received such assistance. It is my feeling that this type of reporting is irresponsible, and is in fact an indirect act of aggression against people who have received treatment for mental ill-health. I ask that the Commission include this aspect of violence in its investigation and report with a view toward having the above types of statements removed from future news reports.

As Coordinator of Parents Anonymous of Kitchener-Waterloo, I am upset by the recent statement of Dr. H.B. Cotnam, Chief Coroner for Ontario, to the effect that his office releases information and stories on child abuse cases to the press for the purpose of "...shocking the public out of its apathy" (Dr. H.B. Cotnam, address to Waterloo Region Conference on Child Abuse, March 13, 1976). While this practice may enlighten the public to the occurrence of child abuse, it is my feeling that it does so in a very unhealthy way. By stressing the violence of child abuse this method of reporting tends to lead to public outcry for legal action and the incarceration

of the abusing individual. Many authorities state that punishment (via incarceration) is not an effective way to deal with abusing individuals. They indicate that jailing does not help the individual and that when the legal process fails to imprison an accused abuser, the child is in greater danger of abuse than ever before. An understanding and supportive approach is required by the majority of abusing parents. I have the fear that because of this method of news coverage the general public will demand undesirable legal action against abusers and as such, these individuals will not receive the type of assistance they require. This, in turn, will lead to an increase in the incidence of child abuse. I ask that the Commission investigate this aspect of violence in the communications industry and hope that this shock tactic of reporting will be stopped due to the very real possibility of undesirable consequences.

On a more general level, I would also like to address myself to the violent content of many television programs and movies. Through my work in Parents Anonymous I have found that many abusing parents have learned abuse (violence) as a method of disciplining their child and dealing with frustration from their own childhood experiences of being abused. The major point here is that the abuse is learned. When this fact is combined with the realization that television is being used more and more as an educational vehicle and that television programming contains a great deal of violence, I am concerned that we are teaching our children and youth that violence is an acceptable way of dealing with frustration. I ask, therefore, that the violence currently found in today's television be deleted, or at least, that the Commission undertake an intensive study to measure and realistically interpret the effects of television violence on the behaviour of our society.

*Trevor Thomas*

## A.W. Fereday Ottawa

As the father of three young children I am concerned at the number of television programs which depict and glorify violence. Over time, such programming if watched excessively, must surely reflect itself with increasing crime in society and a lowering of civilized standards. The example set by our southern neighbour should be a warning to Canada and I hope your Commission can exercise moral suasion over the provincial and federal governments to drastically control third-rate violent programs.

I deplore the federal government's recent decision to let more U.S. programs into Canada via cablevision; this is more mind producing rot from a country having different value standards to ours. I recommend that U.S. programs be banned from cablevision in a first attempt to clean up this mess. I commend the authorities for the new Ontario educational channel.

Television can be an instrument of good in a society if used wisely. Rather than profit-oriented television stations catering to the lowest intellectual standards of society, where we are led to believe that the big market is, the television stations should be encouraged to do everything to upgrade the education, social awareness and culture of our nation. This can be done with programs which are enjoyable without being highbrow. If you consider people as intelligent, give them intelligent programs, they will indeed be intelligent – but if you treat them as violent, give them violent programs, they will surely become violent.

To some extent I have a vested interest in this subject as my uncle was murdered and I am very unhappy when I see my five-year old boy wanting to play with a gun, like his friends. Children want to be like their peers and it is hard to be forever denying them such toys; but if television had not glorified violence and guns to the extent it has, the problem would be minimal as I am not concerned with violence as depicted in the press, radio or films.

A.W. Fereday

## St. Catharines Diocesan Council of the Catholic Women's League

I represent 3,400 members of the St. Catharines Diocesan Council of the Catholic Women's League. We wish to make one point about the nature of violence in the media, and two recommendations.

We think that the most serious violence in the media is not the physical violence shown in police shows and westerns. Much more serious is the less spectacular and more destructive attack on the traditional value system of our society that is carried on all the time by all the media except relatively uninfluential religious media.

A very large part of Canadian society still subscribes to the traditional value system we call the Judaeo-Christian ethic. If we can't always practise it, still we hold it as the ideal and we wish to see it respected by our instruments of entertainment and persuasion, especially when they are tax supported. When citizens worry about media content and form groups like morality in media and citizens for a decent community, it is the departure from respect for the moral order that concerns them, not just the depiction of violent acts. One could make a case, for instance, that the police shows, which are usually charged with being too violent, are actually very moral stories. Violent acts are shown as being repulsive; the violent are punished; the authority of the law is always upheld.

On the other hand, the quiet talk show can undercut society's order far more effectively – by interviewing violent criminals and terrorists sympathetically and ignoring their victims, by constantly holding up the faults of our own society and ignoring its virtues, by unselectively praising societies like China and never once mentioning its repressiveness, by always presenting organized religion, faithful marriage and the traditional family structure in an unfavourable light. Even the situation comedies like *All in the Family* are being used to make our value system look out of date and ridiculous.

The media can't be neutral. They will support some value system. We think they have stopped supporting ours.

We are not suggesting that the media be utterly

bland and never present conflicting ideas. What we ask is that they try for balance; we especially insist that our tax-supported organs not stack the news and entertainment deck against our value system. At least with the commercial media we can exercise some control as consumer. For example, the American Jewish community, which objected to the comedy *Bridget Loves Bernie* because it showed mixed marriage between Christians and Jews as being desirable and funny, were successful in having it withdrawn. They felt it threatened their survival. Blacks and Indians have had similar successes. Catholics have not been as successful in getting respect for our views or in removing the anti-Catholic bias which we think is increasing in the media since it has become unpopular to attack other minority groups. We can document this if you wish. This attack is even harder to bear when it occurs on the CBC, subsidized by ourselves.

We offer two recommendations:

1. That there be on television a family viewing time, when we parents who adhere to the Judaeo-Christian values can trust that they will not be assaulted through our children. This family time might end at eight o'clock on weekdays and nine on weekends, after which viewing could be left to the parents' discretion;
2. That the government appoint a person to whom citizens could bring complaints about media behaviour with some hope of having unfairness and disrespect rebuked and corrected.

Thank you for being concerned about the behaviour of our instruments of persuasion, and thank you for realizing how concerned we citizens are.

*Anne Mugeridge*

## **Brampton and District University Women's Club Committee on Violence in the Media**

### **A. Television Viewing Habits:**

- i) Renewed emphasis should be placed on reading, physical activity, hobbies, and independent play rather than passive recreation through television viewing.
- ii) Additional effort must be made by the media industry to provide more suitable content for children during family viewing time.
- iii) Parents must seriously and consistently take greater responsibility in limiting the viewing time of their children.

### **B. Children's Reactions to Television Programs:**

- i) Children want action, humour, excitement and suspense. At present, these are accompanied by violent action. We, therefore, must provide programs which have these features without violent actions.
- ii) Stringent regulations could be imposed on programs with violent content that enter our country.

### **C. Parents' Reactions to Television Programs:**

- Parents would prefer comedy to violence. Hopefully the media will note this and try to satisfy the viewers.
- A rating of television shows in the television guide stating the amount of sex and violence would aid parents in guiding the family's viewing.
- Family viewing time must contain shows selected with intelligence and taste. This certainly is the responsibility of each station, and strong and very vocal criticism should encourage them to spend time scheduling to achieve an enlightened selection.

*Mrs. Sally Bannister*



## Gordon Sinclair, Toronto

In your travels around Ontario you have been showing a short filmed item hurriedly done by myself and expressing the view that violence is a natural part of our history and our heritage as human beings.

I'm here, now, because I feel more strongly than ever on this point – and I emphasize the word “feel”.

I represent no one but myself and like many of my generation, did not have the opportunity of academic education. What I offer is not wisdom or observations made by a person with appropriate university degrees, but gut feelings.

Since your Commission has attracted so few briefs that do not complain about violence or what they call “*excess violence*”, I'd like to say that *without* violence or its threat, we become vegetables unable to take care of ourselves.

Violence is not only useful or necessary, it is essential to human survival. Without it we would become pitty pat cream puffs, and absence of physical violence would soon embrace mental violence. Protest could disappear.

The human is an animal and animals are at times violent by nature.

Consider the baby. She is among the most violent creatures on earth. The baby is unable to protect herself, feed herself, shelter herself or even move from place to place. To survive she *must* make her needs felt through violent screams, shrieks and cries. She must kick and scratch and demand.

Gradually, as this baby grows up, she gains a measure of what we call civilization. She becomes house broken, learns that screams and shrieks are not her *only* means of getting her needs.

It is not by accident that the highest-paid sports are the most violent: boxing where the aim is to render an opponent senseless as quickly as possible and bull fighting where the aim is to kill the bull before he kills you.

It is no accident that the sport drawing the biggest crowd is the Indianapolis 500 automobile race, because fans hope to see violence and some of them certainly hope to see death.

I have been disgusted with some of the so-called violence in hockey, not because anyone has been hurt, but because it slows the action of a well-played game. The number of hockey players seriously injured is negligible, whereas the number of people killed or maimed in traffic comes to tens of thousands in a Canadian year.

As to violence in plays, movies or television, the people who take such scenes seriously must be descendants of the same people who took the love stories of an earlier generation seriously.

The big moment in films of the Twenties and Thirties was the church wedding with happy brides and tearful mothers trying to con us into the belief that “they lived happily ever afterward”.

Those who believed that would probably believe that blowing a head apart is routine procedure on our streets.

In *writing* there has been no book in any language as violent as the Bible and yet that document is not only accepted as fit for reading but is revered and cherished.

The Bible tells us that Moses was given the Ten Commandments by God. That story and those commandments – seven of the ten being negative – are well known.

But how many people have read the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy which outlines what God will do if you break or disobey those Commandments?

This god, the one who deliberately murdered by drowning every baby and child on earth, threatens the most hideous of punishments; violence the like of which you have never dreamed. The book is considered holy.

Every species of mammal, bird, fish or reptile has a pecking order and that pecking order is recognized as, in part, carrying with it the potential for violence.

I realize these are wandering observations, but I for one would prefer a measure of potential violence to a life without struggle, disagreement or hostility.

It would be a sad world if we all peacefully agreed one with the other, yet at least 95 per cent of the people who have appeared before this Commission have declared that violence is a *bad* thing and have deplored and viewed with alarm.

List me among the other 5 per cent . . . violence is part of life; *all* life. It is essential to survival.

*Gordon Sinclair*

## **John Bassett**

### **Toronto (edited transcript)**

I am Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Baton Broadcasting Incorporated, a publicly owned company; the control shares lie with a company called Telegram Corporation, of which I am Chairman. Baton owns CFTO-TV in Toronto; it owns CFQC-TV in Saskatoon and owns three radio stations, one in Windsor, one in Ottawa and one in Saskatoon. I am also Chairman of Inland Press which does commercial printing and owns 12 weekly newspapers in the perimeter of Metropolitan Toronto. I am a director of the CTV network and a member of the executive committee of that organization.

I break down the content of television into two categories: news – reporting of events, including sports – and a second category in which we either create or purchase programs for the purpose of entertainment. Insofar as CFTO-TV is concerned, the standards I apply are clearly understood by those who work for me; they understand that I am the responsible officer as the holder of the license that permits us to operate. I accept that responsibility totally and completely in front of the CRTC; the programming standards that pertain are those I regard to be in good taste.

Recently, the CTV network bought the movie *Deliverance* for viewing across the country. I hadn't seen the movie, but I had read the book; an employee of the station called and suggested that I screen the film before it was shown on CFTO; it was scheduled for 9 o'clock one evening and was being shown that same evening in the Toronto market over Buffalo's Channel 7.

We have no responsibility and you have no responsibility for what they show in Buffalo and I don't give a damn what they show on the Buffalo stations. That's up to them, and it's their business. *Deliverance* was, as it happens, shown on Channel 7 at 9:00 p.m. I saw it and ordered that it be shown on our channel at midnight.

We have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in the past 15 years promoting CFTO as a family station. I don't have to go into the details of that movie at a public meeting, but it just didn't seem to me to be in good taste.

In the case of another, innocuous program

called *Good Times*, which, other than the pilot I am ashamed to say I'd never seen, I again got a call from a member of my staff. The program was on at 7 o'clock and an ad for it said that this particular episode would deal with venereal disease, but in a happy and tasteful way. I didn't even bother to look at it; I just said, "Don't run that show; let's show something else." We do have a control system and good taste are the key words to that system – not necessarily related to violence. I have never cancelled *Streets of San Francisco* or *Ironsides* or any of the cops and robbers shows at all.

I don't believe that television programming affects or triggers abnormal actions in normal people. When I was a young fellow being brought up, there was no television and because I went to boarding school, when I came home for holidays, my parents allowed me to go to the movies on an almost unrestricted basis. I would claim to have been a normal kid; my parents might have thought otherwise, but I regarded myself as a normal kid. I can remember the Edward G. Robinson movies, the Little Caesar movies, all the George Raft gangster movies, and so on. But I could also, without thinking about it, tell the difference between real life and fantasy and I believe that the same thing applies in television. I think that people watching *Streets of San Francisco* and other cops and robbers shows know they're not real, just as they did in the old westerns where they used to shoot all the Indians down. They were fantasy.

I don't want to appear unfeeling or cynical, but the fact of the matter is that I don't believe that a normal, reasonable person is motivated to go out and shoot and kill by the fantasy that he sees on the television screen. I just don't believe it. And if a specific program can be shown, without doubt, to have been responsible, the person so triggered starts out by being unbalanced. I think that it is unreasonable to assume, if my premise is correct, that you're going to program television on the basis of exceptional and abnormal cases.

I'm of a generation and an age where a lot of people fought a war, myself included. I mean a real war. I was in the infantry and fought in Italy and Northwest Europe, where you could see the enemy. I don't think my generation, as a result of

that, became any more or less violent. That was an episode in real life for those of us who were lucky enough to survive. We came back. What had happened was past. We had done it and we went on with our regular, normal lives. I am no more violent than the average person – maybe a little, but not abnormally so. Maybe I am a little more definite in some of my views.

Television programming goes in phases. Five or six years ago the Western was the big deal – it was what was popular and there were an awful lot of Western programs on television. The last three or four years it's been cops and robbers and the private-eyes – the *Cannon's*, the *Harry-O's*, the *Police Story's*, the *Hawaii Five-O's* and so on.

The latest ratings show that these programs are beginning to tail off and I don't know what the next phase will be. Underlying all these phases, the situation comedies like *All In The Family*, *Rhoda* and so on have maintained a steady popularity. But people are not as enchanted with cops and robbers or with Westerns as they were.

I don't relate crime in the streets and so on to television programming. You may have people much more expert than I am on this subject, but I hope that if that view is presented by experts, either psychiatric or other, the Commission would demand a great deal of proof and practical demonstration to support such a view.

I not only do *not* believe that we should censor violence when it occurs in events that are news, I believe that if someone is mugged in the subway or a little girl is abducted and raped that the news should stress those events. I think the first responsibility in this particular area is to reflect what is happening in the community, as unpleasant as it may be, in the hope that something will be done about it at the law enforcement level, in the courts or at the parole board level. I believe that any news editor or head of a television station or newspaper publisher who swept those events under the rug would be absolutely derelict in his duty and should get out of the communications business. I couldn't believe that more strongly.

Happily, in Toronto, the beating up of people in the subway is an infrequent occurrence. My view is that it rates highly as news because of its infrequency and because we live in the kind of community we do. If we want to keep this

community the way it is, so that this type of story remains news, it must be highly publicized in the hope that people will be concerned about it and that the voice of public opinion, the editorial pages of the newspapers, will support the law enforcement agencies and *keep* this kind of event infrequent.

People in the media aren't different from anybody else; I have three young children at home, aged three, six and seven and I must tell you that television viewing is just as much a problem to me as to any parent or school teacher in the Province of Ontario.

I don't want to disillusion you, but the fact is that 90 per cent of the calls of complaint we get are the question: "Why was my program pre-empted?" Over the past 18 months, fewer than one per cent of our calls of complaint have been about the content of programs – that they were too violent, too dirty or too sexy. And that in spite of the fact that we have the most-viewed station, not only in this competitive market, but in Canada. So I can only believe – it indicates to me that we are doing a decent job.

My judgement as to what is good taste on television may not be the best in the world, but I have not met anybody who is better and I have been in the communications business now for 40 years. A television operator such as myself is dependent upon the acceptance of his audience; in my case, it also involves the living of about 1,500 employees. They are trained professionals who have pride in their professionalism and their living depends on it. Therefore, I believe I am as well qualified in the field of television as an appointed civil servant to censor programming.

With reference to the news, we edit simply to compress what is available from various sources to fit into our two major news formats. We don't edit by saying we won't show something because it is too violent.

We have a very tough standard about commercials; CFTO is a tremendously strong advertising medium. I am not suggesting that we are different from other television stations, but it would be a frosty Friday before any advertiser would give me any directions about programming.

There was a recent network commercial that showed a man's deodorant of some kind or other

and there was a man in the shadows naked from the waist up, but as he turned away the camera went down a big, hairy male backside that wasn't particularly attractive to me. I refused to use it and the network was a little cross but I just thought it was in bad taste. The network fellow said, "You're pretty prudish", and that may be, but, what the hell, you can sell underarm deodorants just as well some other way. Other networks argued about it because they were prepared to run it but I just said, "So what, I'm not going to carry it"; because the advertiser couldn't get the needed exposure in the Toronto market without CFTO, they changed the whole ad and eliminated that scene. No sweat.

Every available prime-time slot has been sold, though we have some availabilities in what we call fringe time, 8 o'clock in the morning and other such times. We carry some Government of Ontario advertising, including a very violent series on the use of seatbelts which shows heads being smashed in. With the new Government of Ontario directive that its advertising is not to appear in or near violent programs, we will just run that advertising at some other times and would be glad to do so. There are many advertisers delighted to get the slots now filled by Ontario government ads.

I have made lots of mistakes over my long years in the communications business, now in television and previously in newspapers, where my largest partner – the man who made it possible for me to purchase *The Telegram* – was our biggest advertiser, the late John David Eaton. John Eaton never, ever suggested to me anything about the contents of a newspaper, in spite of the fact that he'd put up the money to buy it and in spite of the fact that he was, by long odds, my largest advertiser. Any advertiser can do with his money what he likes when he is advertising, but he sure as hell cannot tell me how to program my station.

I don't think that the IODE resolution to boycott advertisers supporting violent programmes will make any difference because I don't think members will pay any attention to it.

The lack of advertisers would not cause us to change program content so long as ratings and surveys showed that those were the kinds of programs that people were tuning in to watch on CFTO.



I am a consumer as well as a television operator and an advertising message indicates certain things to me to which I have a certain reaction: if I am in the market to buy a suit of clothes and I suddenly see, either in a newspaper or on television, an advertisement that appeals to me, I may be motivated to go and buy what seems like a good deal. If I see a program, on the other hand, I am not motivated because I don't relate the violence in the program to real life.

I don't think children relate violent program content to real life and I think the control of television content is the role of the parent. My own children are only allowed to watch *Sesame Street*, *Polka Dot Door*, and *The Brady Bunch* – and that's all they watch. Period. End of story. My children don't watch cartoons; it's a combination of their option and my parental guidance and the fact that mostly they are doing other things.

If I thought that it was possible to demonstrate that certain programming was harmful to children, I would review the times of programming and would perhaps do it even more stringently than with movies like *Deliverance*.

I'll tell you where we might be guilty. We have reruns of *Ironside*, the story of a San Francisco policeman, which we ran for a long time in prime-time; it is a very popular program in the late afternoon. That may not be a good thing because it is run at a time when perhaps children, lots of children, see it. We did it for competitive reasons.

I don't think you can prove that television causes violent behaviour; when the outrage occurred in Munich at the Olympic Games, did television have anything to do with that? Not a damn thing. Those were Arab extremists, exterminating Israeli athletes. The bombing or blowing up of an airplane – I wonder if anyone can really show statistics linking such action to television; I think they are tied to all kinds of other things: political reasons, God knows what.

It can be argued that public disenchantment with the war in Vietnam grew as the American networks sent reporters who became disenchanted and instead of sending neatly edited and cleaned up film, started showing unedited, raw news material, taken by television cameramen and newsmen, some of whom lost their lives. It was a

factor in the growing disenchantment of people in the United States with the war in Vietnam.

In my view, I can't be responsible to my shareholders if I am not responsible to the public. I believe that absolutely. I might say that I am not an ideal president for a public company because for years I didn't have a public company. I am responsible, in the last analysis to myself; I was a grown, middle-aged man before my company ever went public and I remain responsible to myself as I was for 20 years as a newspaper publisher. And if I am not responsible to myself, they better get someone else to do the job.

In order to be successful you've got to appeal to and be acceptable to and responsible to a huge spectrum of public opinion. If you are not responsible to them and doing a job for them, your shareholders – who are part of the public too – are going to suffer.

The people who watch our television program station are not appalled by what they see, they are not offended and the vast majority of them are able to differentiate in their own minds between fantasy and real life. That, I think, is really the nub of it.

If you bring down a report from this Commission that convinces me that the people in my coverage area are being harmed by television, that it is really a contributing factor to the rise in crime as opposed to all sorts of things that I believe are contributing to that rise, then you can be quite sure I'll react.

*John Bassett*

## George Gerbner Philadelphia (edited transcript)

I am affiliated with the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, a graduate school training communications researchers. For the past nine years, we have been studying television programming and in the past three or four years have been studying the patterns of public response to programming, with particular relationship to violence.

The assumptions behind the research rest on two key notions: first, that there is a difference between real-life violence and symbolic violence; second, that symbolic violence itself is not a simple act, like breathing or walking, but is essentially a social relationship in which the issues of equity, of negotiations, of domination become paramount. So violence, especially symbolic violence, has to be seen as a lesson in behaviour—particularly in the ways in which we relate to one another and especially as this relates to people who are different from us.

Symbolic violence is essentially a demonstration of a social relationship. To look at it only from the point of view of imitation or from the point of view of aggression (though I wouldn't want to minimize their importance) is totally inadequate. In the social relationship involved in violence, you have to look at the total pattern; you have to look at both sides of the coin: the victim as well as the perpetrator of violence. Violence is a social scenario with many parts; it is highly instructive and teaches many lessons.

When we study television programs, we do this as one would study the real world: the geography, the demography, social types, occupational and professional make up, age, sex, and educational distribution of television characters. We look at relationships among them, of which violence is only one. We look at the nature of sex roles, of occupational typing, of cooperation as well as of conflict. We look at the goals characters pursue, the means they use to achieve their goals and the outcome of these goals. What we are trying to do is not to examine what a single person sees, but what is absorbed by the total community of television viewers.

We have compiled the so-called Violence Index

— a multi-dimensional measure of the different aspects of violent representation, such as the percentage of programs that contain any violence at all, the number of characters that enter into a violent relationship, the distribution of characters who commit violence and of their victims, their ages and sex and so on. We look at the rate of violence — that is, the frequency at which violent incidents occur per program or per hour and we combine these by a formula into a single rating.

The Violence Profile is an addition to the index; it looks at additional factors, including the consequences of exposure — that is, the extent to which the television viewer transfers life in the fantasy world of television into his concepts of the social reality of life in the real world.

After all the years of investigations, hearings, and commissions into violence, the index has fluctuated up and down but has not changed very much when you look at the composite index, which combines all kinds of programming, all time periods and all three major American networks. This relates to drama only and not to the news.

We have discovered that, while Americans may think that they know what goes on in San Francisco or New York, from our point of view most Americans don't know what goes on in their own community. They think that what they see on television is what goes on and that it is not essentially very different from real life. Just recently, in a California court room, an attorney for the defence stepped up and said, "Your Honour, the prosecution is badgering the witness." The judge said, "Yes Mr. Smith, I have seen that objection made on Perry Mason too. Unfortunately, it does not exist in the California Code." Not just the less educated public, but even our professionals, more and more derive some notions of behaviour in certain situations from having seen these situations frequently — sometimes once a week, sometimes once a day — on television. This is why we began with the research into drama, because we feel that it is story telling, that we had to go to television where most stories are told most of the time to most of the people, and because we feel that it is where most people get much of their information about life.

In looking at violence on television insofar as

the world of drama is concerned, it's not only the frequency, but the nature of violence that we examine. Frequency is important, but we need to look at what is going on in television and ask what it teaches.

One way to do that is to look at social relationships as presented on television and try to discern patterns: who is doing what to whom; when you look at hundreds of programs and thousands of characters, strangely enough there is a fairly clear and highly stable pattern.

For example, if you are a male in the world of television your risk ratio is 1.2. That means for every male character perpetrating an act of violence in the world of television, there are 1.2 male characters suffering as victims of violence.

If you are a woman, your chances of encountering violence decline; you are not as likely to get involved in violence but, if and when you do, your chances of ending up as a victim are much higher than for males. This suggests that the lessons of violence are differently applied. There are the risks of aggression and also the risks of victimization; when it comes to victimization, different kinds of people have different rates of risk that generate a different degree of fear among them. If you are a non-white, if you are not native-born, if you are very young, if you are very old or any combination of these, your risk goes up. The number of victims in a category divided by the number of violent incidents in each group gives you a risk ratio. You end up reproducing the actual power hierarchy of American society.

For example, if you see an old black woman on television – and there are a few of them – every one of them gets killed. None of them has a chance to do anything.

We come to the question of what this does to a perception of reality. This is a question we are beginning to explore.

Dr. Robert Liebert has shown that between the ages of five and 15, a child will have seen 13,700 acts of violence; I think, in fact, that his figures are about two years old and that the number would be even higher now. We find that members of our children's panel watch an average of six, not three hours, of television per day and it is not unusual to find youngsters who watch seven, eight or even nine hours a day.

By the time a child is five – not between five and 15, but by *the time the child is five years of age* – he or she will have spent more time with television than will ever be spent in any kind of classroom. Only television comes into the home and envelops us from cradle to grave. Furthermore, only television is used non-selectively by most people. It is used like the climate; therefore to say that, if you don't like it, you can turn it off, is as misleading as to say that if you don't like pollution in the air, you can hold your nose. We can only do that for so long and, in any event, even if you do turn it off, most other people in your society don't; – what you don't get directly from television, you get through them. You can't get away from a sense of collective responsibility that doesn't readily lend itself to easy solutions.

The pattern of response from our panels, from our samples of adults and our children's samples, seems to show that violence and victimization on television puts a small minority on the side of perpetrators of violence because they see their chances of being advanced more in the role of perpetrator than in any other role.

Amongst the vast majority, it generates a sense of fear, suspicion and mistrust which, I submit, is an essential part of the scenario in the instigation of violence.

As a social relationship, violence depends as much on the training of the victim as it does on the person performing the violent act. In fact, I think the sense of fear and the anticipation of victimization has as much – if not more – to do with the incidence of violent crime and violence in general than does the perpetrator's sense of the opportunities involved in performing the violent act.

On the other hand, it is probably foolish to ascribe all this to television. Sometimes I think that air conditioning has had as much to do as television with depopulating our cities in the summertime and making them unsafe. But perhaps the two together have had this effect on the whole life-style of communities that don't live outdoors any more. There is a sense of tremendous fear and suspicion and mistrust that sets up a total situation in which most of crime, including violent crime, is a relatively safe, low-risk, high-profit opportunity. If you really look at

it as being a kind of investment, it is only our inhibitions and fears that tend to make most of us think of ourselves as potential victims rather than as potential murderers.

Overall, I would say that most or all of our findings – especially among people under 30 – suggest the existence of a television generation that was born into and has grown up with that medium. Most of our findings suggest that living in a world of television tends to lead to an exaggerated notion – exaggerated among heavy viewers compared to light viewers in the same groups and in the same neighbourhoods exposed to same realities of life – of the sense of our living in a dangerous world, with very high risks, with high likelihood of encountering violence on an average night.

There is another question: when people anticipate danger and crime, does that make it more likely to happen? I think the suggestion is that when you set up a social climate of fear and anticipation, there will always be entrepreneurs of the criminal activity to take advantage of it and it becomes, I think, a self-fulfilling prophecy.

There is a general and rising tendency for people to ask for strong authority, for more protection and to look upon anything that gives a measure of security, or perhaps an illusion of security, as an acceptable solution to their great anxiety and the fear that is generated.

As I've said, television is a non-selective medium for most people; it is like the environment. It is more like religion – in fact, I sometimes call it the new religion. It is highly repetitive, highly ritualistic. Diversity and originality is what people want least from television and they get disturbed if, for example, they see a different ending than what they expected.

We then have to begin to look at television, not as something from which people select, but which most people take in its totality. You then have to look at what views of humanity are imbedded in essentially repetitive kinds of production. When you look at it in that way, you find that trying to limit programming to a certain number of hours each evening leads to protests from groups who, for perfectly good reasons of their own, feel that they are being made second-class citizens – for example, institutionalized people, old people,

farmers who work different hours, people who work the night shift.

Television has to be seen as a curriculum to which people are entitled and which they will demand and which they think of as a total structure; we need to understand how best to organize it, how best to finance it and what controls are necessary to ensure the broadest representation of tastes, of human aspirations.

I think the sooner we arrive at a position in which concern about violence is no longer simplistic and we see it as a mass-produced commodity – a product – the better. Television is always tightly controlled; the question is on whose behalf, for what purposes and with what diversity of representation of views going into the total program structure. I was delighted to hear that your Commission will look into a number of different countries on both sides of the social structural divisions that exist in our world, because every country faces, in one way or another, the new problem of what to do with this new form of universal acculturation that is even more powerful than the school systems used to be. How do you provide a resource base for it and structure rewards for the kinds of things that society wants its children and its adults to have? I think that the politicization of the discussion about television, while it has its problematic and sometimes disturbing aspects, is inevitable. I think that more and more, the determination of television structure will be a part of the political process; candidates running for office will take positions on what to do about television, just as they now take a stand on what to do about schools, transportation and a variety of other important issues. Television will become one of them.

We don't know whether different program structures and different policies make a contribution, independent from other factors, to differential crime rates in different countries. What we need is not only individual countries launching and conducting their own long range studies of television and other media content and the responses to it, but we need this done cooperatively and comparatively so that we can begin to illuminate relative trends; we can begin to see our own country's performance, in combination with



that in other countries and in relation to others, so that we can examine whether a different program structure makes an independent contribution to violence or simply reinforces whatever else is happening in other aspects of society – or whether the results are a mixture of both factors.

I think that, ultimately, television is part and parcel of our culture; I don't think it acts autonomously, but that it essentially cements and completes the pattern in a total society and extends it into all areas of life and into all communities, even those that, until recently, were relatively isolated and removed from the mainstream. Now everyone is in the mainstream and television is, in many ways, the mainstream; it is not something apart from the rest of society. Perhaps because of that, it's become very important to find out what the consequences are of different program structures and whether, indeed, different programming policies make an independent contribution to the crime rate not accounted for in differences in age, in education and in social circumstances.

When you are dealing with violence – and I am sure you know this better than I – you are not dealing with a simple little marginal fringe manifestation of television programming; you are dealing with part of the commercial formula. The basic formula that goes into much, if not all, of television programming is the cost to the advertiser per thousand viewers. One of the attractions of violence is that, although it is not the most popular type of program, it is highly instructive, it is active, it has a kind of minimal attention value, but is economical to produce. So there is a tendency among producers to use it in preference, I think, to more diversified and more imaginative methods of problem solving. When you are talking about violence, you are talking about something that is very close to the heart of the program formula and the question of control. This is why I think it turns out to be such a stubborn and unyielding problem, at least in the short run.

Heavy viewers, and in fact most television viewers, don't select programs; they select the times of the day and the week when they watch. Heavy viewers don't find much time to go to movies and most wonder what they did before television; it seems they didn't do much of

anything. Typically, they are not the people who, before television, had a wide and rich cultural life; they're the ones who have never been plugged into the central cultural process and whose leisure time is now monopolized by television.

On the whole, you will find that heavy and light viewers are different groups of people. Heavy viewers are, on the whole, of lower educational and income level, they have less mobility and have many fewer aspirations for the future and for their children; they come from a different segment of the population than do light viewers and any direct comparison between the two in terms of television is likely to be misleading, because the groups are different in many other respects. In order to get the kinds of findings and the comparisons between heavy and light viewers that we report, you have to control other factors.

I think that television has obviously not suppressed other forms of cultural participation and social activity, but it has been superimposed as an overall organizing framework on those whose activities have not previously been self-directed. The competition between television and schools, teachers, newspapers and so on has increased and is self-defeating to a large extent, because you cannot compete with television.

The most hopeful element in educational life, in religious life, in the arrangement of the media, is to provide alternatives and to retain a critical, analytical spark that, in my opinion, society needs to survive and to be able to change. Television is a massive stabilizing arm and, on the whole, it cultivates resistance to change. To maintain any flexibility, we have to encourage among those who are willing to select something other than what they see on television, what you might call a counter-force – alternatives that remain alternatives, at least until television itself is able to absorb and integrate more of them. As to the political implications of massive monopolistic control over such an instrument, I think that in terms of violence there is no question that results show that heavy viewing or extensive exposure to heavily violence-laden television increases not only fear and anticipation, but its acceptability.

When people are not easily shocked any more, I think the possibilities of perpetrating violent acts and of getting away with them are more easily

fulfilled. Under those circumstances, the political implications can be truly frightening if it were not for groups such as yours and others who are becoming aware of the problem. I think there are enough people in political life and in the communications industry itself who are becoming aware of that and who are groping for some ways of adjusting to the new cultural circumstances.

I think that if I were to summarize these political implications, I would say that the cultural assumptions upon which the notion of representative democracy has rested for the last two or three hundred years, the cultural conditions on which it was predicated, have changed. We have to re-think the forms of democratic process when rigid adherence to the old forms and trappings of that process continue even under very different cultural conditions and lead to a very different, if not opposite, effect. Cultural underpinnings have changed and the forms themselves have to change in order to get the same results. The main way in which cultural conditions have changed are due to television, because the cultural assumptions underlying representative democracy assume a selective public, not a non-selective public. They assume the emergence of a public made up of those who know, out of real-life experience, where their interests lie and who are able to select the kind of information and entertainment that reinforces their own existence and that can provide information to sustain their different identities; they somehow find representation for their own points of view from a fairly diversified number of options.

Television basically changes all of this; it doesn't in any sense reflect the diversity of self-interests of different groups in the public; on that level, it leads to the disillusionment of the public and to the creation of a large and rather disinterested, fearful, anxious, largely homogenized, voting public looking for national solutions in the direction of safety, of security, of a relief from the anxiety that much of their cultural experience has generated.

So if you dissolve the autonomous public that knows its own self-interest into a national whole simply looking for relief, you in effect change the cultural basis for the electoral system in western democracy. We really don't know how to cope

with this new situation, except to try to build into it national cultural representation which is now controlled by a relatively few institutionalized forces. We try to include a greater diversity of elements in order to build into this potential steamroller a more differentiated, more sensitive and better balanced set of considerations behind total programming. Once that is done, the prejudicial and repetitive pattern of violence should also change and conform to the new requirements and sensitivity that may be built into a new or somewhat different set of institutions.

I think that the television system of any country is part of the cultural arm of the establishment of that country; in effect, it functions to serve, protect, stabilize and otherwise maintain the existing social structure. The question is whether the existing social structure best serves itself by maintaining a rigid and resistant kind of citizenry. I think the existing commercially supported television structure doesn't fully serve all the interests, even of the existing industrial form. In Canada, there is a little more recognition of a broader variety of aims in mainstream television itself. It is somewhat more evenly divided into the commercial and public system and thereby serves a broader set of aims, and has a broader total resource base.

As social institutions change, television is also going to change, but I don't think that it is realistic at this point to conceive of television, any more than the educational system, as an agent of reform when, in fact, it is just the opposite – an agent of resistance to change. There is a great deal of room for improvement in designing television service to be more adequate than it now is.

*Dr. George Gerbner*

## **Manitoulin Secondary School West Bay**

My feelings about violence in the media are that I am for it. These types of shows are what a lot of people like to watch.

Some of these movies tell the people what is happening in the world now, and what has already happened. Several of these movies are over-exaggerated but they are more exciting to watch.

Quite a few of the award-winning movies have some violence in them. The movie *Jaws* showed a lot of violence when the shark kills a lot of swimmers. When I watched this, I found it more interesting and exciting than comedy or family shows.

In newspapers also, people find it interesting to read about someone who killed somebody else, or if someone committed suicide.

Even without violence in the media, violence will still go on around the world.

*Karen Nahwegahbow*

## **Manitoulin Secondary School West Bay**

My opinion of this violence is why should violence be abandoned? This world has lived with violence since man has existed. All I can say is this world has only known the world violence and there is no way that you can stop it. But I know that you think that we Indians know violence and this is the only way that we can survive.

*Gus Migwans*

## St. James Cathedral Toronto

As Christians we wish to bring before the Commission considerations of a kind that might otherwise be overlooked. We recognize that in many respects our society and culture are not specifically Christian and that Christian teaching does not fall within the mandate of the Commission. At the same time, it is our own conviction that the issues of our society, and particularly the issue of violence, can best be analyzed and understood from a Christian perspective.

It is not our intent to argue against all depictions of violence in the media. On the contrary, we recognize the prevalence of violence in human society as a reality with which the media must deal. We are concerned with purposes and manners of presentations rather than with limits and restrictions. The basic thesis of this submission is that the media must strive to foster critical discrimination on the part of their audience so that violence is experienced not as an end in itself, not as a thrill for its own sake, but as a moral and spiritual problem in human life.

It is imperative that the Commission should take into account those philosophical dimensions of the problem of violence which reflect a more than merely immediate and contemporary concern. It appears to us that the role of the Commission has arisen largely out of the crisis of violence in our own time. This crisis has provoked understandable public apprehension. But at a deeper level it is rightly identified as a crisis of society's values in general. Such a crisis itself often becomes violent in its manifestation, both in society and in the media, so that its resolution becomes impossible without radical moral and spiritual conversion. It is to such a level of concern that we urge the Commission to address itself.

By the same token, we believe it is critical that the Commission's enquiry should not be wholly defined or conducted on the basis of current sociological research. Rather it must be as broadly and philosophically reflective as possible. This means, among other things, that the Commission must be self-critical about its own methods of research and analysis. Above all, its scope and intention should

not be determined by contemporary majority biases. The Commission's task requires more than a mere reflection of the opinion of the citizens of Ontario.

Our own obligation as Christians is to insist that the problem of violence (its causes and its remedies) cannot be understood as merely social or political in the sense that pragmatic social regulation or political action might be regarded as an adequate approach to its solution. For no one familiar with the history of man and society can deny the enormous role violence has always played in human affairs. As Dr. Gordon Warne of the Clarke Institute testified at the inquest following the May 28, 1975 shootings at Brampton High School, violence is a fact of life which characterizes human conduct in all societies throughout recorded history. On such a view it would be delusory to suppose that such social or political measures as might be undertaken by government could eradicate or even significantly reduce man's susceptibility to violence.

Notwithstanding sentimental misconceptions about Christianity, the acknowledgement that violence is endemic to human existence in this world is also strictly in accord with Christian doctrine. For according to the Christian view, violence is inescapably part of 'fallen nature'. . . inescapably part of life as we experience it. Violence is in this sense 'normal' to man and society; there is a kind of 'necessity' about it. Yet Christianity also teaches that true freedom entails transcendence over 'necessity' of this kind, transcendence through struggling against it. To be free is to engage in such struggle. Christians especially must struggle against violence precisely because, apart from Christ, violence is the form that human relations normally take. The more pervasively violence seems to characterize the 'necessary' way of life in our world, the greater is the obligation of Christians to challenge that 'necessity' and that way of life. But such a challenge must begin with the utterly honest and realistic recognition that violence is so deeply endemic to human existence as we know it that social and political action alone is incapable of dealing with it.

As Christians we must say firmly to those responsible for purveying experiences of violence



(however vicarious such experiences may appear to be) that they should not allow themselves to be merely enslaved by the 'necessity' of violence but should seek transcendence over it, and hence true freedom, by cultivating critical discrimination and moral perspective. This basic exercise of free-will is vital regardless of any cause and effect relationship there may be between violence in the media and violence in real life.

The kind of discrimination and perspective which we seek can best be described by making a fundamental distinction between violence on the one hand and authentic power – that is, strength or authority – on the other. Those who are secure in the exercise of authentic power are not enslaved by dependence on violence; those who typically resort to violence betray their own insecurity. Violence is indeed a perverse substitute for authentic power. It is this perversion which characterizes our world of enslavement to 'necessity' and which undermines the fulfilment of true human freedom.

In Judaeo-Christian terms, authentic power is that which characterizes the sovereignty of God. Authentic power was also, by delegation, what God conferred upon man for the exercise of legitimate dominion over the rest of creation. It is through man's sin, through his attempt to usurp the sovereignty of God, that violence enters into human life and becomes a kind of 'necessity'. Thus is brought about man's alienation from God and also from his own true humanity. That alienation, and its expression in violent form, is archetypically represented in the story of Cain's slaying of his brother Abel. The ultimate violence that man brings upon himself is thus death. Death, like all violence, is seen by the Judaeo-Christian tradition not as part of God's original creation, but rather as a consequence of man's sin. For the Christian, moreover, just as death is the ultimate form of violence of 'fallen nature', so the only ultimate transcendence of violence, including death, is that which the original creator alone is able to accomplish. Christians believe this has indeed been accomplished by the death and resurrection of Jesus, through whom all creation came to be and is redeemed; and that in relationship to him man is able to attain freedom, fulfilment, and peace.

The development of modern society has gone hand-in-hand with a relentless development and extension of violence. It is a distinctive feature of human life in its more developed stages of so-called civilization that there has emerged an ever more destructive proneness to violence, lacking in natural purpose. Thus, enslavement to necessity – 'fallen nature' – has been merely compounded by the way in which man has sought to develop his civilization. Just as progress has meant an inexorable development of more and more, bigger and bigger, so it has in effect provided even more sophisticated means of practising man's inhumanity to man.

It is evident that Christians must approach the fact of violence, whether in real life or as depicted in the media, in much broader terms than those of conventional dictionary definitions or, for that matter, the terms of reference of the Royal Commission. This broader Christian approach is well formulated by the Presbyterian theologian Robert McAfee Brown:

An initial pointer toward an expanded definition can be found by noting that one of the Latin roots from which we get our English word is *violare*, which means 'to violate'. Whatever 'violates' another, in the sense of infringing upon or disregarding or abusing or denying that other, whether physical harm is involved or not, can be understood as an act of violence. The basic overall definition of violence would then become *violation of personhood*. While such a denial or violation can involve the physical destruction of personhood in ways that are obvious, personhood can also be violated or denied in subtle ways that are not obvious at all, except to the victim. There can be 'violation of personhood' quite apart from the doing of physical harm.

The term *personhood* is important. When we talk about a 'person' we are not talking about an object but about a subject. We are describing someone who is not quantifiable or interchangeable with another. Each person has unique worth. There is no legitimate way to assert that one person is 'worth more' than another person, since the worth of each is infinite. And since personhood means the *totality* of the individual, and never just the

body or just the soul, we are reinforced in our notion that violation of personhood can take place even when no overt physical harm is being done. In the broadest terms then, an act that depersonalizes would be an act of violence, since, as Simone Weil has suggested, it transforms a person into a thing.

In terms of such an approach, it becomes evident that Christians must exhort the Commission to concern itself with a phenomenon far more insidious than overt physical violence alone, however vivid and detrimental the latter may be. The Commission must not only take account of all instances in the media of the treatment of violence as morally neutral, all examples of the glamorization of violence, all examples of the implication that violence itself is an acceptable form of combating violence, but also all instances, however subtly disguised, of the pursuit of domination at the expense of humanity and personhood; and all instances of that insecurity which compensates for the lack of authentic power by trying to manipulate human life selfishly and reducing other human beings to subservience.

If the Commission is to take into account as broad a perspective as we deem to be necessary, it will find itself obliged to raise issues of a morally, socially and politically controversial nature. For example, one sign of violence which is very common in middle-class society is the way in which parents may lack the patience or awareness to allow their children to fulfill themselves as individuals. Such parents may have very definite idealistic values which they wish to impose upon their children. They domineer rather than guide. They are authoritarian rather than loving. They are dictatorial rather than supportive. A parent who legislates what a child shall watch on television but never spends any time sharing the experience with his child is performing an act of violence against that child. There is little doubt that an anxious and insecure parent who believes domination to be the only final security will likely raise children who share this value system. This happens in spite of the hostility which a child may display in his attempt to assert his independence of the parent's will. Ultimately he gives in and

loses his own identity in the process, the victim of an environment of parental tyranny – an environment which is unconsciously but systematically violent. Is it any wonder that such people will seek violent action on television as a means of escape or indulge in romantic fantasies about the achievement of domination for themselves?

If violence at this level is to be adequately confronted, the Commission will have to consider making recommendations that could well revolutionize the exercise of educational responsibility in the home, at school, and by the media themselves. For the issue at this deep level is one of developing critical, moral and aesthetic precepts and practices among media producers and consumers alike, such that the acceptance and glorification of violence on its own terms (no matter how covert) becomes unmistakable and unacceptable to our society. The development of such precepts and practices will depend upon a long and deeply rooted process of training of human sensibility.

Education such as we have in mind will not try to evade or disguise the fact of human violence, but rather will of necessity take it into account within a realistic understanding of the nature of man and society. That understanding must give full recognition to all instances of the abuse of human personhood whether physical, mental, emotional, moral or spiritual. Realism about man and society must necessarily underlie any attempt to transcend, and to 'place' in perspective, the reality of violence. It is in turn such a 'placing' that alone can legitimize the incorporation of violence in the media at all. So it is, for instance, with the 'classics' of literature, in which violence, rendered within the perspective of human worth and moral imperative, serves as instructive and educative. Yet it is precisely this 'placing' in perspective that most media-products of our own day conspicuously lack: it is precisely the high conception of the nature and worth of man without which the incidence of violence in the media has the character not of catharsis, that is the painful purging and cleansing of the experience of violence, but rather seems to provide an inducement to violence in real life.

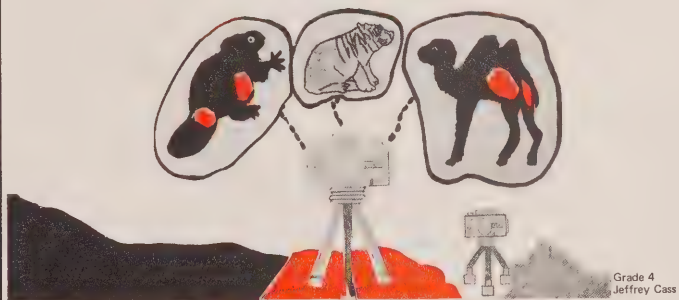
It is the earnest conviction of this group of Christians that a well-founded and sustained effort of moral and humane education (in the

# It's a killer



Grade 3  
Donnie Smith

# SHOOT A PICTURE NOT A GUN



Grade 4  
Jeffrey Cass



Grade 5  
Campbell Barr

homes, in the schools, and by the media of our society) must be sought by the Royal Commission. Although such education cannot in its own right be regarded as a panacea to the problem of violence, it is a *sine qua non* of facing the crisis of values in our time. Only if it exercises its mandate with this degree of latitude, and only if action is taken along these lines, will the Commission's work help to ensure that future generations will be equipped to cope with the violence to which they are likely to be increasingly exposed, both in the streets, and in the media. And the media themselves, in view of their increasing share in the common experience of all of us, must be exhorted to see well-founded and sustained programs of education on their own initiative in order that the violence they so lavishly purvey can be seen, 'placed' in perspective, and transcended in a manner that is morally and humanly enhancing.

*R.F.M. Jones*

## Ontario Safety League Toronto

The Ontario Safety League has been operating a School Safety Poster Programme since 1913. In recent years, this service has expanded and is now offered to grade schools in five other provinces and is translated into French by the Quebec Safety League.

During the school year, ten different posters dealing with ten different safety subjects are distributed. A lesson guide for the teacher is attached to the poster and the subject matter is always carefully researched.

Subjects to be dealt with during the school year are finalized after consultation with police safety officers and educators. Because of the wide geographical area covered by the program, teacher feedback is encouraged and frequently uncovers other safety areas of concern.

Due to the number of requests from Ontario teachers and educators, the League's Family Safety Department decided this year to include the subject of gun safety.

The importance of teaching young children firearm safety is obvious. It may seem that teaching gun safety should be simple. Common sense tells us that guns are dangerous and a simple "don't touch" may seem to be in order. We must, however, consider the ambiguity which surrounds the use of guns in our culture.

We work very hard at telling children what they should and should not do to avoid accidents. But, where firearms are concerned, we work equally hard at confusing them. We tell children not to play with guns and that guns are dangerous and then we allow them to play with toy guns. To a very young child, the distinction between a real gun and a realistic-looking toy is a difficult one to make.

If this is not confusing enough, we forget that a child's sense of reality differs greatly from an adult's. Fictional situations, such as cartoons and movies, all too often depict firearms as the logical and only solution to certain problems. The victim is finally dealt with effectively by shooting him. However, the victim is never really dead. Invariably, cartoon characters get up and go on their way after being shot. Cowboy heroes can be



“killed” in one movie and manage to turn up alive in another show the next night.

In order to get a better insight into how children themselves viewed the question, a poster competition was held for grades one through six. Six hundred and eighty entries were received, representing 84 schools throughout the province.

From these submissions, Ontario Safety League staff made the following observations:

1. Children in the southern areas of the province tended to reflect the theme: *Guns Kill People*. People are featured as prime targets. Illustrated subjects included crime, war, monsters and UFOs.
2. Children in northern areas reflected a natural use of guns, and seemed accustomed to having them around the home. They showed the use of guns in survival and hunting situations, frequently portraying children with firearms. Moose, bears and small game such as rabbits were often pictured as targets.
3. One-third of the illustrations showed television cartoon characters, such as *Bugs Bunny*, *Elmer Fudd*, *Yosemite Sam*, *Batman* and *the Lone Ranger*. Cowboys and Indians were also depicted in violent scenes. War illustrations were curiously outdated, reflecting World War II, rather than today's modern dress and equipment.
4. Two entries were clearly illustrated with the gun used in the film *Day of the Jackal*. It is interesting to note that this film was featured on television just prior to the close of the contest.
5. In a number of cases, children had illustrated different types of guns, complete with identification. Some small hand guns were even labeled “Saturday Night Specials” a term frequently used by the media.
6. Most children seemed oblivious to danger, although they were not oblivious to people being hurt. Frequent use of cartoon bubbles showing victims still speaking indicated that the victim was not really dead.
7. There was a great deal of comment on alcohol and guns and the use of guns in tense family situations.
8. There was no obvious distinction in attitude

between boys and girls toward the subject in either the northern or southern areas.

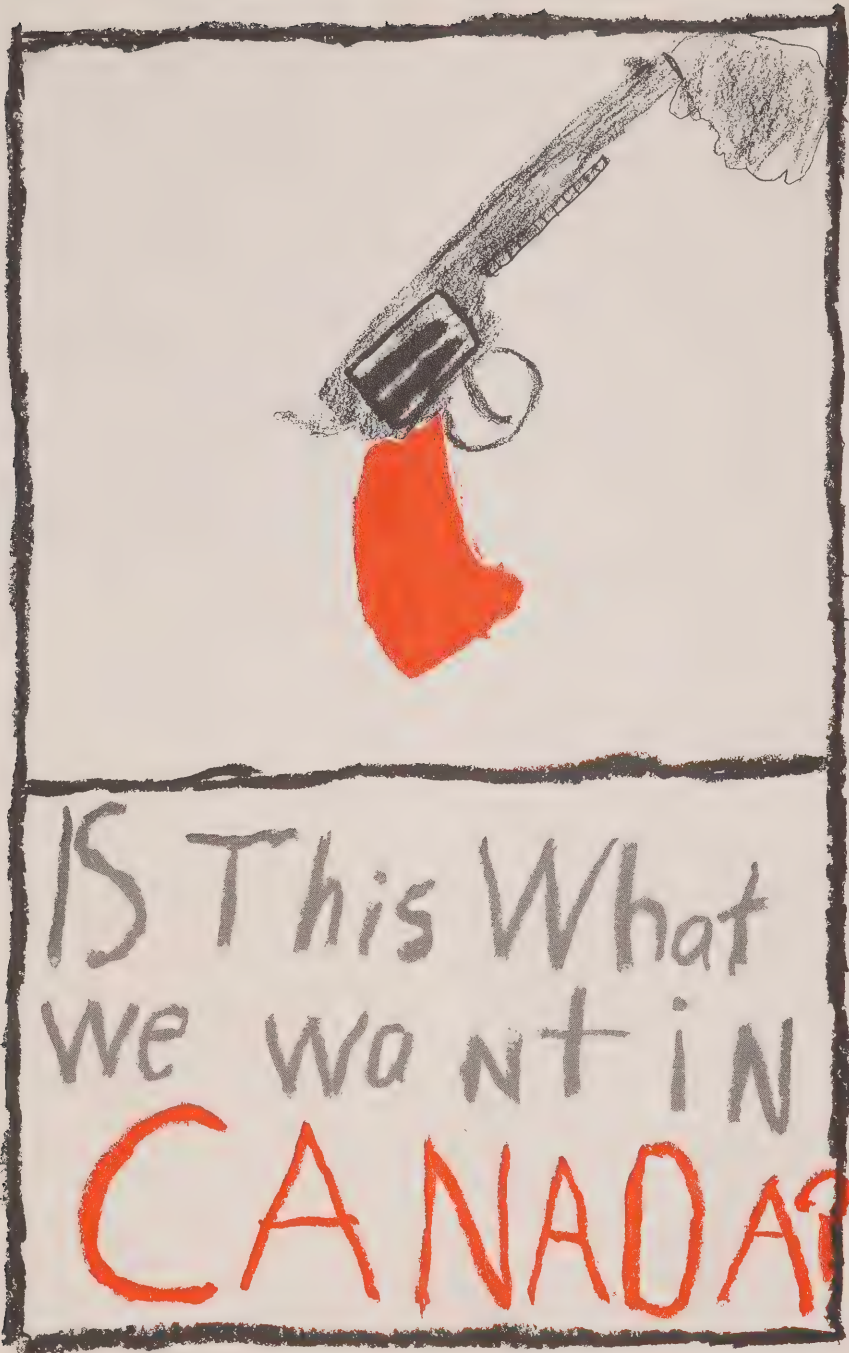
While the Ontario Safety League is not making any recommendation to the Commission, it is our general feeling that the Commission would appreciate the observations coming out of this poster program.

The safety movement, as a whole, recognize the influence of both films and television on young minds. Tarzan had children swinging from trees for many years; Evel Knievel started a craze for stunt riding with bicycles; a recent fad in the U.S. of children swallowing nickles and dimes is reportedly due to the popularity of *The Six-Million Dollar Man* whose daily intake of nickle is necessary to his well-being.

As in any other area, it is education that is needed and there is surely parental responsibility in teaching fact from fiction.

*Terry W. Thompson,*  
*Public Information Manager*

*Nancy Waite Willer,*  
*Family Safety Department Manager*



Grade 5  
Linda and Angela Wiens

**DON'T POINT  
YOUR GUN  
AT ME, IT'S  
DANGEROUS**



**KIDS  
KNOW  
GUNS  
KILL**

Posters courtesy of

*Ontario Safety League*  
Toronto, Ontario



**Leave Guns Alone**

Level 1  
Donna Ozimuk

## **Canadian Association in Support of the Native Peoples Ottawa**

As Executive Director of the Canadian Association in Support of the Native Peoples, I welcome this opportunity to present the views of our Association.

The Canadian Association in Support of the Native Peoples is a national voluntary organization of 5,000 members across Canada. Besides individuals, our membership includes corporations, government departments, labour and church groups, schools and professional organizations. Formerly the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada, CASNP originated in 1962.

The major task of our Association is to generate an awareness and understanding among non-native Canadians for native efforts and achievements. This is stimulated through our library and information services, publications, teachers' workshops and the presentation of public forums on contemporary native issues. These activities over the years have brought us into contact with many sectors of the Canadian public. We have had a unique opportunity to look closely at prevailing prejudices and to make certain observations as to their causes.

The forms of violence in the media which we would draw to the attention of this Commission are found in the western films regularly shown on both English and French-language television networks and universally known as cowboy and Indian movies. In our experience, and evinced through the nature of the hundreds of inquiries handled through our Toronto Information Centre every month, these films, in their depiction of native people, have done immeasurable harm in enforcing and reinforcing stereotyped images of the savage or stupid Indian. (Only consider that the word Tonto in Spanish means fool.) These stereotypes are especially damaging to the young viewer, and have, in fact, influenced the views of generations of Canadians, often beyond repair.

The typical western film portrays two aspects of violence pertaining to the concerns of this Commission: a flaunting disregard for human life, and a massive violation of the dignity of a particular group of people.

A native observer describes their effects in this way: "Mentally, Indian people have been crippled by the image they see of themselves reflected through the mass media. Their advancement in the modern world has been stifled because historically they have been treated in the media as savages who plundered, murdered and raped the so-called peace-loving invaders."<sup>1</sup>

In 1974-75, the Canadian Association in Support of the Native Peoples participated with the Ontario Department of Education in the production of new and improved curriculum materials on native peoples for use in Ontario schools. Yet one must conclude that efforts in this direction – however worthy – will not be effective as long as children continue to be exposed through the media to the false and distorted image of Indians which permeates the western film tradition.

It is difficult to explain why there has not been previous pressure to remove these films in both Canada and the United States. Can it be that the public has accepted what it feels cannot be changed? Has television become a sacred institution? We sincerely hope this is not the case.

We believe it is significant to note that an image which, at one time, was as common to American films as that of cowboys and Indians, has virtually disappeared. I refer to the shoe-shuffling Negro, the Uncle Tom type, rolling his eyes upward, slurring his speech, and serving us mint juleps as if subordination were his natural destiny. Films containing this once-familiar figure vanished from view following more than a decade of mass protests and violent demonstrations by black people in the U.S. demanding to be treated fairly. The question which we pose to the Commission, and which the Commission must in turn consider is: Must Canada wait for a similar upheaval in order to correct an obvious wrong?

We recognize that not all western movies portray a distorted image of Indians, and that some have attempted to present honestly the dilemmas of both the European settlers and the indigenous peoples. We cannot then seriously propose that all western films be removed from Canadian television screens. We would recommend that a review board of native people – preferably educators – be established and given



the authority to judge which of these films are suitable for screening.

We would propose further that this undertaking be initiated in Ontario and would assist in any way possible, leaving the technical problems to the Commission to investigate. We are encouraged by the development of the Canadian version of *Sesame Street* and, in particular, the segments which portray native culture in a positive light. We are aware that native people requested and implemented these changes.

We would urge at the same time that all native productions receive tangible encouragement. An official of the Native Council of Canada has stated that "if we are to change the blatant misrepresentation of our people through the media, then it will be necessary for us to initiate and exercise control at the production and artistic levels of media presentations . . . No longer can we accept the notion that the western European man is able to portray us as we are."<sup>2</sup> Such encouragement may well result in new forms of drama and film, derived from an uniquely Canadian experience and no longer to be confused with a questionable American tradition.

In closing, we ask the Commission and all Canadians to join us in calling for a change which is long overdue.

*Robert Fox*

## **The Hamilton Association for the Advancement of Literature, Science and Art Hamilton**

As an organization which provides, and has provided for more than a century, public lectures of cultural interest, the Hamilton Association for the Advancement of Literature, Science and Art is not in a position to conduct research into the effect upon readers, listeners and watchers of violence in the communications media. However, our members support the submission of our sincere, strong feeling on the matter, as well as our suggestions and recommendations.

The wise of all ages and of all parts of the world have recognized that man has an innate need for beauty, truth and goodness, just as plants need sunshine, soil and rain. Without exposure to those essentials, they tell us, mind and emotions, from which our attitudes develop, cannot evolve in healthy fashion. Since actions are governed by attitudes, any society must concern itself with whatever has a hand in forming attitudes. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

We believe that the vulgarization and brutalizing of our culture, which is showing up in vandalism and crime, are evidence that some influences are relatively recent date have been dulling the sensibilities and consciences of Canadians. We are forced to the conclusion that the disproportionate amount of violence portrayed on television and, within the past dozen or so years, in motion pictures, as well as the detailed reporting of violence in newspapers and magazines, have been the strongest of those influences. Many of those who shout "freedom of the press" when this point is raised, have forgotten that the other side of the coin of freedom is responsibility.

We also believe that the medium of television bears a special responsibility, not only because of its powerful visual impact and its constant availability in the home, but because of a more powerful subtle influence. Television's peculiar fascination tends to create a kind of addiction, and then it has presented large amounts of the sort of programming that erodes the very values that would have prevented the need for such addiction.

1. Theresa Nahanni, *The Mind Benders*, TAWOW, Vol. 4, No. 2.

2. Duke Redbird, *Aboriginal Rights and Communications, The Forgotten People*, Vol. 4, No. 9.

It is not only that such programs have depicted crime and violence, but that they have depicted them in irresponsible ways, in our opinion.

1. One aspect of violence is vandalism. In an effort to reduce the vandalism which has grown to astonishing proportions in recent years, we would recommend that all news media

- a) exercise restraint in reporting incidents of vandalisms, since dramatic reporting of them gives ideas to readers and viewers who are attracted by excitement and challenge;
- b) report no incident of vandalism in a light vein as though it were a prank, but in language and presentation that clearly indicates its seriousness;

and that television and motion picture script-writers keep vandalism of any kind out of so-called wholesome movies.

2. Another aspect of violence is crime. In order to bring about a healthier, more trusting society, we would recommend that all news media

- a) give the punishment or the order for restitution and the difficulties of victim and family, rather than the crime itself, the publicity and emphasis; (we would urge that television crime and police fictional series alter their emphasis in like manner);
- b) exercise restraint in reporting all violent acts or crimes, since there is some evidence that these reports have provided examples for a few readers and viewers to follow, and have been the triggering factor in the suicide of some depressed or retarded persons;
- c) use correct terms in reporting crimes or acts of violence, and carefully avoid any terms, such as "cop" which slant the report;
- d) keep the names of individual policemen or policewomen out of the news, since each is but a part of the public body, the police force;
- e) report with restraint any evidence of crime or violence in controlled institutions, in order to avoid any possibility of instigating further violence.

3. A more subtle kind of violence, we believe, is done to the viewers of television by the frenetic

character of many programs (for example, *Sesame Street*). We therefore recommend that the Commission, if it has not already done so, set up an investigation of the effect upon children of each constant movement and change on the screen.

4. Because violence to a language indicates causative factors in the culture and, in itself, effects changes in that culture, we believe that this is an area of the communications industry in Canada which requires serious study, which we suggest be instigated by the Commission. Meanwhile, we recommend, that, for the sake of immigrants and our own children: personalities and announcers on radio and television be encouraged to express themselves, not in slovenly language, but in correct English and French.
5. The purpose of the earlier Board of Radio Broadcast Governors and the later CRTC was to provide a bulwark for Canadian culture through a chain of government outlets across Canada. Since this system of radio and television broadcasting is tax-supported, it has the responsibility for upholding the values of the best traditions of our national origins. In the light of the present inquiry, we suggest that the manner in which those original guidelines are now being followed be examined.

These considered views of the members of the Hamilton Association for the Advancement of Literature, Science and Art are herewith respectfully submitted.

*Mrs. Allan Kennedy*

*Past President*

*Professor Harold Freeman*

*President - 1976-77*

## The Afro-Asian Association Sault Ste. Marie

The increasing use of violence in the communications media programming and reporting raises two crucial questions for an average citizen.

1. Does regular exposure to violence make people more susceptible to engage in violent acts themselves?
2. Does the media, through selective reporting of violence and characterization of violent persons, create stereotypes of nationality and ethnic groups harmful to satisfactory interpersonal relationships?

The answer to the first question is largely dependent upon scientific research in human and behavioural sciences. We will leave it to the expertise that the Royal Commission has at its command. However, in this connection we may point out that the power and pervasiveness of the media renders into helpless targets, those of us and our families who find excessive depiction of violence offensive to our cultural values and spiritual well-being. On the one hand, it is of critical importance for any Canadian of distinct cultural background to keep up with vast amounts of information in order to participate effectively and creatively in the society. On the other hand, the very sources of disseminating and processing information – the television, films, radio, newspapers and books – exact a price through the sale of scenes and stereotypes of violence. Over a dozen television shows being shown in Sault Ste. Marie, mostly cabled from U.S. networks, ranging from the *Streets of San Francisco* to *Kojak* and *Columbo* divide the world into cops and robbers, foreign conspirators trying to annihilate mankind and our white American saviours, e.g. *Speed Racer*. (Other shows in this category being screened on the local television station and cable channels are *Hawaii Five-0*, *Baretta*, *Starsky and Hutch*, *The Rookies*, *Switch*, *Rockford Files*, *Adam 12*, *SWAT*, *Joe Forester*, *Dragnet*, *Police Story*, *Josie and the Pussy Cats*). No matter what the impact of these television programmes is on human psychology, their ideological message is quite clear – our essential nature as human beings is nasty,

brutish and mean. This image of mankind is not only strengthened by the film industry through its X-rated productions, but also by the pseudo-scientific best sellers written by Ardrey, Morris and Lorenz. Speaking on behalf of the local Afro-Asian Association, I have been asked to convey to the Royal Commission that this view of human nature is repugnant to our cultural conceptions and we find it increasingly hard to protect our children from being indoctrinated into the acceptance of such outlooks.

The second question raised here is of more direct and critical importance to us: Are members of certain ethnic groups stereotyped by the media as perpetrators of violence? We have reason to believe that this is so. Though cops and robbers have largely replaced the cowboys and bad Indians, the scheming Oriental, outwardly full of smiles and politeness, but covertly pursuing his dubious trade, still pops up on the television shows (*Speed Racer* and *Gilligan's Island* are examples). The sabre-rattling Arab has started making more frequent appearances, even in the innocent looking children's cartoon, since the advent of the energy crisis. In the latter case, the newspapers are perhaps more guilty of promoting such distorted caricatures. Our local newspaper daily treats us to a nationally syndicated miniature cartoon, *Wicks' World*. The creator of this masterpiece of journalism spares no opportunity to malign the Arab character.

We are also aware of the news media's eagerness to sensationalize, in a systematically distorted manner, certain episodes surrounding the lives of ethnic minorities, particularly our brothers and sisters of African origin who have long settled this continent. While very little is reported by the media about the daily violence of poverty, unemployment, sub-human housing, "Paki-busting" and other forms of discrimination, certain tragic episodes, not less common in the society at large, are exploited to the hilt to create images of violent minority groups. Last Christmas, supposedly the time of peace and tranquility, our local newspaper splashed on the front page a story of alleged murders of two black children in New York by their mother and her lover, complete with all the gory details and a large picture of the children's smiling faces. We . . . ask the Royal

Commission to consider the motives of a small-city newspaper for enlightening us to what is allegedly happening in New York, while a number of similar alleged episodes which took place in and around Sault Ste. Marie over the last year were not sensationalized in this manner. One consequence of such distorted and sensationalized reporting is quite clear to us. Each time our brothers and sisters face the situation of seeking employment, clearance through customs and immigration posts, or even going to a neighbour's house or police station for help at times of crisis, we are likely to be treated with suspicion, if not contempt.

In view of short notice and inadequate resources, we are only able to highlight a few sore points and concerns. We hope that the Royal Commission, with its able members, will look into these matters more thoroughly and come up with effective recommendations.

*Hassan N. Gardezi*  
*Department of Sociology*  
*Algoma University College*  
*Sault Ste. Marie*

## **Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, Ontario Theatres Branch**

May I give a brief summary of the activities and objectives of the Theatres Branch.

1. The Theatres Branch is responsible for the approval of building plans for all theatres and drive-ins in conjunction with local authorities.
2. It is responsible for the inspection and licensing of theatres, drive-in theatres, projectionists, film exchanges and projectors.
3. The Theatres Branch is responsible for the setting up and supervision of projectionists' examinations and tests.
4. We are also responsible for the classification and/or censorship of 35mm, 16mm, 8mm films and videotape. In addition, approval of all advertising relating to the above film and tape with the exception of radio and television.

There are eight jurisdictions which have classification or censorship criteria in Canada. In my view, all eight, in one way or another, censor and in some cases, with the exception of Nova Scotia recently, reject film.

Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have three similar classifications as follows:

General

Adult Entertainment (simply a recommendation)

Restricted (no one under age 18 admitted)

British Columbia – three classifications as follows:

General (as Ontario)

Mature Entertainment (same as Ontario's adult)

Restricted (under 18 may attend accompanied by an adult)

Quebec - three classifications as follows:

A – Film for all.

B – Film for adolescents and adults (no one under age 14 admitted).

C – Film for adults only (must be age 18) similar to Ontario Restricted.

Alberta - four classifications as follows:

Family Entertainment

Adult



Adult Not Suitable for Children (under 16 must be accompanied by adult).

Restricted (no one under 18 admitted).

Saskatchewan – four classifications as follows:

General

Adult (recommendation).

Restricted Adult (under 18 must be accompanied by adult).

Special X (no one under 18 may attend).

Manitoba – four classifications as follows:

General

Mature (parental discretion).

Adult Parental Guidance (under age 18 must be accompanied by adult).

Restricted Adult (no one under 18 admitted).

P.E.I. and Newfoundland exhibit films which have been classified in the other provinces.

Motion Picture Association of America – four classifications as follows:

G

P.G. (parental guidance).

R (recommended that anyone under age (17) – (18) in some States be accompanied by adult).

X (no one under age 17 – 18 may attend).

There are some minor differences, i.e., Nova Scotia lists Restricted Theatre-Only Films. These films are not to be shown in any drive-in theatres in the Province of Nova Scotia, and Manitoba recently won the cooperation of the industry in restricting the product in drive-ins to Adult Parental Guidance only. In other words, film shown may be seen only by those who are 18 or over, unless accompanied by an adult.

The same applied to British Columbia and Nova Scotia.

All of the discussions about the Branch centres around the work of the Censor Board.

It may be of interest to you that we are responsible for the safety of patrons who have access to some 215,000 seats in the “hard-top” theatres in Ontario, and, in addition, there are some 53,000 drive-in spaces. We have a staff of four inspectors who constantly travel the province inspecting and doing the best, within a limited budget, to maintain good housekeeping and ensure an enviable safety record, which this province has had for some 60 years.

Qualifications For a Member of the Board:

Generally, a Board member must have a good knowledge of English vocabulary and usage, an understanding of the nuances and idioms of contemporary speech and an awareness of the changes taking place in the language.

Members should be able to relate to the young academics whose critical appraisal of the film industry has become so much a part of the background against which our society is mirrored.

The Board member must be familiar enough with the law to be able to hand down decisions that will ensure the films they pass will comply with the Criminal Code of Canada, thus avoiding seizure by the police departments.

It is incumbent on every Board member to be aware of the changing mores of society and make certain decisions are an accurate reflection of community standards – not just those of the Toronto community in which our Board happens to sit, but of the community of Ontario, to which we are ultimately responsible.

Members of the Board need to be extremely flexible in a society whose standards are changing rapidly. It takes considerable skill to balance the tightrope between the conservatism of some and the extreme liberalism of others, with, at the same time, a realization of the rights, not only of the extreme groups, but all shades of opinion in between.

Board members must be alert to public reaction, constantly updating knowledge from the media and every other source of information. They should be vigilant in observing changes in the norms of language. Words which were shocking and indeed banned just a few years ago, are now accepted as normal.

It is important that the Board be careful not to engage in repression of genuine artistic expression simply because our sensibilities are offended by what we see. On the other hand, we are representatives of the people of Ontario and we must be conscious that they have a right to demand that what is shown in our theatres must meet certain requirements, not least of which is the upholding of human dignity.

*Don L. Sims*  
*Director*

**Kawartha Broadcasting Co. Ltd.**  
**Frontenac Broadcasting Co. Ltd.**  
**Toronto**

It is our belief that forms of violence depicted in the media (radio, television, magazines, newspapers, et cetera) are not the cause of violence and crime in our society. We are not persuaded, or are in any way convinced, that media violence can be irrefutably related to what is happening to people in real life. There is no documented evidence indicating the media is to blame. Television is mainly an entertainment medium, along with radio and movies. People look to these forms of communication to be entertained. Any person who might be influenced to commit a crime from watching television is a sick person, and would undoubtedly perform the act regardless, perhaps in some other way, at some other time. In our view, television is being used as a scapegoat, simply because it is here and handy and seems to be the obvious thing to blame. Television was not around to blame in the days when Romans were throwing Christians to the lions, when grotesque forms of torture were used in the Tower of London, when Hitler's hordes came to power in Germany, when Indians and American Cavalry engaged in endless shooting, burning and scalping forays, or when Al Capone and John Dillinger were shooting up the big cities of the USA.

Think too, of the death and destruction currently rampant in Ireland. Not caused by television, but by the twisted theology of a screwball fringe!

Nor is there any real consensus in society as to what is and is not violent programming. Everyone has a little different view on what he or she considers to be violent, and therefore, what should be banned. For example, some find the fighting and high-sticking on a National Hockey League game to be repugnant. Others think the killing of a baby seal abhorrent. Still others feel that prize-fighting, where men are knocked senseless over an agonizing stretch of 15 rounds, to be unacceptable. There is also the violence depicted when a lion savagely ravages an antelope, when a snake slowly devours a mouse, or even when a tiny frog is threaded on a fish hook.

What about the reported increase in child

beating and divorce? Is it suggested these are on the increase because of television? Nonsense! It is because of the frustrations people feel and a breakdown in social values. Consider, too, the great amount of violence depicted in the Bible, and the copious amounts of it in Shakespeare's plays, and even in the fairy tales (Little Red Riding Hood) we relate to small children at bedtime.

Veterinary colleges do not teach student doctors how to crop the ears of a dog because they feel it is a form of mutilation. Yet it is done regularly by many veterinarians simply because the public wants it done.

Where does violence start and where does it end? There is violence in our society in every area and corner. Humans have been violent, in one way and in one degree or another, since history began, for thousands of years, and yet we have had television for only 25 years. The schoolyard bullies of 35 years ago (and there were plenty) were certainly not influenced by television. Now the medium is being largely blamed for the increase in violence in our society.

In our view, the more logical reasons for violence and crime in our society, could more properly be credited to the following:

1. The much greater and ever-increasing gap between the haves and have-nots in our society. Spiralling inflation has left many young people with a frustrated feeling they have been left behind, with little or no chance of achieving many of the desirable things in life.
2. A far too permissive society. Working mothers, (necessary in many cases) unconcerned fathers, often set poor examples of family guidance. Love, kindness and a firm discipline do not always emanate from a loosely run family or a broken home.
3. A trend away from church and godliness to one of selfishness and greed.
4. A far too permissive attitude toward those who commit criminal acts, especially with guns. The abolition of capital punishment, early parole, week-end passes for hardened criminals, and insipid wiretap laws.

5. A lack of sound principles in some of our elected representatives. If the lawmakers of the land are not respected, who can be? Example: two members of Parliament who refuse to obey the law and wear seat belts!
6. A lack of discipline and firm rules for students in our schools. Use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs are tolerated in and around school grounds. In some cases, teachers themselves set a poor example.
7. A plummeting lack of regard for the work ethic. It is no longer considered important by many to hold a job and contribute to the well-being and respect of one's self and family and to the society as a whole.
8. The easy-going welfare and unemployment regulations (or lack of them) which encourages many people to live off the State, rather than earn their keep. (Unemployment insurance costs up a staggering 91 per cent to \$1.7 billion in this coming fiscal year).
9. The spineless stand by government in permitting a few strong-arm labour leaders to bring the country to its knees with unnecessary strikes against the entire population and the national economy. (The post office, the teachers!)
10. The frustrating and seemingly endless examples of sheer waste and inefficiency in government spending on projects which should never be high on a list of priorities.
11. A loose immigration policy which permits undesirables appeal after appeal, making a mockery of Canada's immigration laws.
12. Failure of various levels of government to come to real grips with pollution and problems of the environment. Over a billion dollars is being spent on 16 days of Olympics, while the City of Montreal continues to pour millions of gallons of raw sewage into the St. Lawrence River, every day! Many people are frustrated by this lack of firm leadership and action.

To the contrary, there is much reason to believe that crime programs on television act as a deterrent to violence. By far the majority of offenders on television are caught and punished.

In this way, viewers are being educated to the fact that crime does not pay, it is not glamorous, or profitable or healthy! Crime and criminal acts are regularly downgraded and those responsible shown to be despicable elements in our society. Surely, if there is an influencing factor, a potential bad actor would more apt to be dissuaded.

*D.R. Lawrie*

*Executive Vice-President & General Manager*

## **Lucille Pakalnis Sudbury**

In response to the invitation issued by the Commission, I would like to share a few of my reflections concerning the subject of violence in the media with you.

### **Desensitization of the Public**

As I see it, a key danger inherent in the media's obsession with stories and reportings of violent acts is the numbing, desensitizing effect this has on the mind. One hears of yet another atrocity perpetrated in the world (a mass murder, an IRA bombing), and is unaffected. One incident appears to merge with all the others, and no particular concern is felt; the sensibilities are blunted.

Partially to blame is the sheer abundance and excess of violent acts forming the core of many television shows, especially the police series. Real life police deal with many more areas of crime than rape, murder, or armed robbery, but are they portrayed? Instead, the writers for these programs compete with each other by devising ever more complicated, intricate plots around these same themes. To make matters worse, the current crop of police heroes are all depicted as being tough and unorthodox, are insubordinate to authority, and are often contemptuous of the law they supposedly uphold. Children must have heroes to look up to, but are these really the examples we wish them to imitate? What sort of society will they eventually form?

This same desensitizing process continues in the movies. Particularly in Peckinpah's films, violence is glorified as an art form, celebrated and worshipped amid slow motion, close-up shots replete with blood and mutilation. The result? We are so shocked and/or thrilled by the portrayal that we are diverted from what is portrayed; death and hatred inflicted by man on man.

### **Sensationalism in Reporting**

Related to the above, and specific to the news media, is the technique of sensationalizing a story. For some, it would appear, bad news is good news. It sells. So on the back of others' misfortunes come headlines screaming of disaster and

misery. Has the art of objective, factual reporting been lost? Surely the gravity of such tragedies as the Guatemalan earthquake or the Middle East hostilities is evident enough without the graphics used in reporting them. Last night, on the 11 o'clock news, a film clip from Beirut showed an armoured car dragging the bodies of soldiers killed in the fighting through the streets. Was this to clarify some point I had failed to pick up from the reporter's statement? Was it necessary?

Another example that comes to mind is the coverage of the recent bombing at La Guardia Airport in New York. Newspapers and news magazines subjected me to detailed descriptions of investigators sifting through inches of bloody water for clues, of the screaming and terror of the victims, and of the severed head of a woman thrown onto a ledge. Perhaps the purpose of expounding all the gory details is to evoke sympathy for the victims and a horror of violence, but I do not feel this method best suits the aim. I would far rather see and read less graphic accounts of such incidents, with more emphasis on the measures taken to remedy them, as an effort to accentuate the constructive, hopeful elements in our society.

### **Punishment as a Deterrent to Crime**

Much is said of the deterrent value of punishment handed out by the law for crime. I have some doubt about this view, but perhaps its value seems weak to me only because it suffers from under-exposure.

There is no denying that programs depicting violence are popular. Perhaps they meet some deep need in us to release aggression in a controlled, non-destructive way. This is probably true, although I think any need for violence is witness to a lamentable gap or breakdown in our socialization and humanizing evolution. Be that as it may, if we are going to depict violence in the media, and at the same time place our hope that the incidence of real violence will be curbed by the deterrent value of its due punishment, then I feel that that side of the coin deserves at least equal time. To my knowledge, the police stories produced by Jack Webb, based on true cases, were the only ones to conclude a statement as to



the punishment given the criminal involved. All the others I have seen invariably end with the culprit's being caught (or occasionally killed), building the entire episode around his crime and how he almost got away with it.

### **The Plight of Innocent Victims**

Another point I would like to make concerns the victims of violent crimes. Again, on television and in the movies, the victim has friends who rally around in his time of need. I am a registered nurse, and have cared for people hospitalized following beatings during robberies, et cetera. Many of them have few friends, perhaps limited insurance to cover property loss and/or damage, and suffer considerable psychological trauma following such an incident. But the media says little about them and the aftermath of what may be a weekend lark to a couple of unthinking adolescents who hit the corner grocery store for a thrill. The disruption in the lives of the victims is no small matter.

### **Distortion of Reality**

An offshoot, and a serious one, of the way violence is shown, is a distortion of its reality and gravity, especially in the minds of young, impressionable children. There has been some efforts toward limiting the amount they see in the early evening, but what about that great babysitter, Saturday morning cartoons? Are parents aware of just how frightening some of these shows can be? The science fiction, space ones can be especially so, although perhaps the child's mind is able to understand that it is only make-believe with the more outlandish ones. What about the standard cartoons, though? In them, (*Bugs Bunny* et al) the characters are constantly being attacked, blown up, run over, et cetera, yet are never harmed. I really don't think it is healthy for young children to think they can hit each other with rocks and sticks as a game.

Adults, too, suffer from this distortion of reality when crime and violence are shown to be normal and ordinary events in their daily lives. We become so inured to hearing about and seeing accounts of violence that, unless it strikes close to home, we simply are not moved.

But violence is not normal and ordinary – frequent perhaps, but still intrinsically evil. If we have indeed lost that sense of so destructive a force, we would do well to make every effort towards its recovery.

I ask: What are we doing to ourselves and others? If this is causing our own or another's desensitization to and apathy about the presence of suffering, isn't this then the worst violence: our own brutalization and self-degradation?

Thank you for the opportunity to share these thoughts with you. I wish the Commission every success in its very worthwhile undertaking.

*Lucille Pakalnis*

*R.N.*

**Canadian Federation of University  
Women,  
Niagara Falls Branch**

All of us are more concerned about violence on television than that in other media because of its accessibility, its omnipresence and its impact (on two senses simultaneously and the same themes repeated so much). A large proportion of children of all ages watch it indiscriminately. The young ones cannot really separate fantasy and fact, and some harm themselves trying to copy cartoon characters. The older ones, lacking maturity and judgment, may learn to admire and even emulate some of the more sensational characters. We agree with those who have said "If you don't like it, turn it off", but we are concerned that in many families, children's welfare is not very thoughtfully considered and there is no monitoring, no joint watching followed by discussion, nor even a knowledge on the part of the parents of what their children are watching. Violence in sport, and particularly in hockey, can influence children to behave more aggressively. The mothers of boys in our group are disturbed by the fact that hockey heroes, when they assault one another, are called 'great defencemen' and are approved by the general public.

*Martha Cisneros; Rosanne Federkow; Sheila  
Wolofsky  
Action Committee*

**Mary E. Mainwaring  
Helen D. Saravanamuttoo  
Ottawa**

All responsible citizens must feel concerned about the increasing violence in our society. We believe that it is impossible to see the effect of violence in the media apart from certain trends in society. We feel that the effect of violence in the media is to exaggerate and increase the tendencies towards social and psychological alienation which are becoming more prevalent in Canada.

That alienation can be closely linked with actual violence has been recently and tragically shown in the recent shooting incidents in Brampton and Ottawa; these were done by young men who were profoundly alienated.

In this brief, we wish to consider the interaction of young and immature people with the images and models of violence so readily available, and the role that this interaction may play in increasing characteristics normally shown in the alienated person.

We also wish to examine the ideational content of the media with respect to our brief that the individual person is of intrinsic worth.

We would like, at the outset, to distinguish between two types of alienation.

The first is social alienation, which refers to the general non-relatedness of the individual to the larger, more dominant society. This may be characterized by subjective feelings of hostility or concern with victimization and by a failure to identify with the major institutions of society. There are two reasons for this: one that the individual does not choose to relate to the social institutions, or the other that he is unable to do so and has, in essence, been rejected by the institution. Loss of confidence in government, inability to control the multi-national corporations, scepticism of the value of church or religion and rejection of family values are each manifestations of social alienation. A certain amount of social alienation, especially among the young, may well be a healthy phenomenon, if it is a stimulus for social change. The extent to which it seems to exist today is less healthy. Social alienation can also be the motivating force behind terrorist groups, which is far from healthy. This seems to be

a matter of ethical concern as well as political conviction, and is only affected by violence in media to the extent that the message of the media lacks ethical content.

Of more crucial significance to our brief is the phenomenon of psychological alienation. According to Mitchell<sup>1</sup> "Psychological alienation refers to feelings of estrangement or separateness from the self; experiencing oneself as a stranger or an unpredictable companion. The individual usually has little concrete sense of his own personal identity; his self-concept vacillates tremendously."

This seems to be a disturbance in functioning, and can be understood from reference to Towner's<sup>2</sup> explanation of loneliness, which comes very close to alienation at times, and which results from two main mechanisms:

1. The experiential feelings of being unlovable, resulting from the child's interpretation of being rejected. This develops somewhere between the ages of one and three and results in a feeling of self doubt, which later becomes one of despair.
2. As a result of this feeling of being unlovable, the child tries hard to do what he "should" do in order to try to become lovable. This results in his losing touch or becoming alienated from his value and personality orientation. As a result, he is unable to develop a sense of personal identity in adolescence.

The same mechanism seems to be at work where the individual feels he is not lovable if he shows anger. This results in denial of the anger, with the result that the individual again loses touch with his value and personality orientation.

Characteristics of such people are an amazing unpredictability of behaviour because the individual lacks a firm self concept to give him a frame of reference, usually great hostility, chronic boredom or apathy, restlessness and drifting and an inability to form intimate personal relationships. These are the people who commit the violent acts such as the recent shootings mentioned earlier; other examples are Lee Harvey Oswald and James Earl Ray (convicted of Martin Luther King's assassination). The list could be continued. In other words, such people are

intensely dangerous, more so because they are not predictably so.

It is our contention that the effect of the media on average adolescents is to increase factors which are normally characteristics primarily of the psychologically alienated and sometimes of the socially alienated person.

Berger<sup>3</sup> has shown relationships between society and psychological constructs; it is from the general social reality we perceive, that we construct our psychological concepts but, once formed, the psychological concepts can act back upon the psychological reality. In other words, the model has re-sizing potential. For example, he says that in a society where demonology is socially established, causes of demon possession will empirically multiply. This links with Polak's<sup>4</sup> finding that the future image a society has influences that society's future.

Thus, anything that affects the way people, especially adolescents, view life, will affect also the goals and behaviour of those people. If one sees that many of the effects of the media increase characteristics normally seen primarily in the alienated person, one assumes that the view of life is primarily an alienated one, and this, we believe, has important consequences for us all.

## **The Effect of the Media**

### **1. Establishment of Youth Culture.**

The chief developmental task of adolescence is the establishment of personal identity, but since our society has no meaningful place for adolescents, it becomes increasingly difficult for young people to do so. We lack effective transition rituals into adulthood. School is compulsory to a relatively advanced age and institutional needs have tended to pre-empt the human need of the adolescent. We are, therefore, facing our adolescents with a "waiting period" which is, in effect, a vacuum for many.

In order to fill this vacuum, a strong youth culture has developed with which the youth can identify. This culture is increasingly being controlled by the media and its ideational message is competitive, materialistic and conforming. It is very important in determining status, and, by this means, in imposing values.

This means that the adolescent, who identifies with the youth culture, no longer actively selects the values that fit his concept of himself, but takes over those that are ready made by the media. This prevents, or at least makes a lot more difficult, the process of identity formation. Thus, the adolescent identifying with the youth culture, like the psychologically alienated person, has difficulty with identity. He tends to see his own past as a series of separate parts, unrelated to each other or to his present self. In the competitive atmosphere of the youth culture, what praise or approbation he receives is perceived, not as warmth and loving, but as a tribute to his ability to do what he "should" in order to make himself lovable.

## 2. *The Presentation of Characterization and Modelling Effect.*

The need for a warm, caring, personal relationship as a pre-requisite for mental health is well established. In talking about this with respect to the media, especially television, we do not mean watching television as a substitute for relating to other people, although this may be a problem too: what we mean is the model value of people. We are particularly concerned with the friendly relations, as this is the ideal from which the norm for healthy behaviour is established.

One of the tasks of adolescence is to establish relationships outside the family, and in doing so, he creates psychological models on which he bases such relationships. He may, of course, form models from real contact with people, such as direct observation of families other than his own, contact with adults through groups, part-time or summer work, et cetera. But such contacts are more limited today than ever before, so the influence of films, television and advertising of all kinds is accentuated. Thus, the psychological models constructed by the individual may not be as largely built of "whole cloth" as one would wish, but may be greatly influenced by the perceived images of social reality presented by the media.

The model presented by the media is that of the young man, independent, aggressive, materially motivated, violent and viewing sexual encounters as adventures rather than experiences to demon-

strate caring. The young woman is primarily desirable, and, as such, becomes linked with the material possessions of the dominant man. With some notable exceptions, therefore, people are characterized as phony and immature, or as used by people. Comedy is usually based on deceit or fooling someone. Warmth and caring is often sentimentalized and unreal. The individual, therefore, derives no sense of an intimate personal relationship from the media, nor any sense of commitment to others. The media present people who do not care for others. Since these models provide guides for action, the effect of the media is to increase characteristics of the alienated person among young people. There is a danger that the adolescent will perceive the view that the media presents a socially real adult life, and he will, therefore, fail to develop a feasible, useful or responsible view of adulthood.

## 3. *Presentation of Violence as a Status Activity.*

Violence seems to be very fascinating as it is presented in the media. Part of the reason for this fascination seems to be that it can be used as a substitution for excitement. Everyone, but especially young people, has a great need to be deeply interested in, stirred and moved by someone or something. This is especially true in sexual relationships, but it is also true with respect to people in a non-sexual sense; ideals, causes, ideas and relationships to people are natural well-balanced ways to fill this need.

Violence is presented in the media in a depersonalized way so that the event is a way of fulfilling this need and becomes of no consequence in itself. It is also separated from its consequence. Thus, the individual uses violence for manipulating his inner state and the effects of violence are seen as something divorced from the action.

Violence becomes more and more a status activity. It is quite clear that, besides portraying violence in a narrative way, the media have also glamorized it. The violent man is usually the man who has the good-looking woman, the flashy clothes and car and, even if he dies at the end of the program, he comes to life in another program next week or month.



The hero, just like the “bad guy”, has a pattern of reacting to frustration, and that is by violence. This emphasizes the importance of violence as a status activity. Other methods of dealing with frustration, as well as unacceptable or difficult situations, are not prevalent on the media. Surely common sense says that violence is the last, not the first resort.

Thus violence becomes a depersonalized status activity, divorced from its real life consequences. This is certainly the type of behaviour that a psychologically alienated person engages in, usually in a dramatic way. Thus, the media are again emphasizing and glamorizing behaviour that has normally been seen as characteristic primarily of the alienated person.

#### 4. *The Condition of Victimization.*

Watching the act of victimization seems to be a means of vicariously releasing hostility. The process is what is important and the victim as a person engages no sympathy or even recognition as a human being.

A fascination with victimization is characteristic of both the socially and psychologically alienated person. Institutionalized methods of dealing with this hostility have been common to many societies and many have released this tension by the persecution of minorities; examples of this abound, the most notable being the Nazi persecution of the Jews and the most recent being the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Malawi. Perhaps, for most people, the North American way of dealing with this through cartoons and violent programs is, at least, a less harmful way.

Therefore, we recognize the need for fantasy and vehicles through which fantasy can be identified and expressed. However, it should be clearly distinguishable as fantasy, and so must be able to be seen as unreal. Otherwise it serves as a guide to action and victimization becomes a status activity. We do not believe that this distinction is sufficiently clear in many recent programs.

Thus victimization portrayals, instead of releasing hostility resulting from present alienation, become guides to action where the victim is depersonalized, or not seen as a person, and this,

too, seems to be characteristic of the psychologically alienated person.

#### 5. *The Ethical Impact of the Media.*

What was said earlier of the youth culture is equally true of the ideational content of the whole media. The predominant impact is that of materialism, where status is given to material possessions and one's value as a person appears to be involved with having possessions.

It is our belief that all people, but especially young people, need to have more satisfying objectives, more authentic models than those presented by the media, which hold the individual in such low esteem and continue to tolerate, even encourage, victimization and afford little or no human dignity to anyone, even victims of such events as recent earthquakes. We affirm our belief in the intrinsic worth of the individual and in “the importance and value of the individual personality”.<sup>5</sup> We feel that, unless this respect is afforded to the person as a model in the media, then it will not be offered to the person in real life. The only real freedom for people in a society can come when the individual is that society is respected as being of intrinsic worth.

We see this degrading of the importance of individuals tied to a revolt against society, usually against current materialism, but sometimes for nationalistic or ethnic values, as being the force behind terrorist groups. We see the degrading of the importance of individuals combined with the great hostility of the psychologically alienated person as resulting in assassinations of prominent people, or even one's classmates, as in the recent shootings mentioned earlier.

What has historically distinguished our society and other western societies from others such as the Soviet Union and eastern countries, is that the human being has been considered of intrinsic worth. It is this belief that has resulted in the great advances in what can be called the human condition. Glamorization of violence, separation of a victim as a person from the act of victimization, or the measuring of human worth in terms of material possessions, is an impingement on all our liberties in that it degrades us all as people. To the extent that the media affects the thinking and

values of people to accept these attitudes – to that extent is our liberty as individuals affected.

## Conclusion

Much of what has been said about adolescents is applicable not only to other immature persons, but also, in a changing world, to people in times of transition and readjustment.

We have pointed out that in such times of readjustment, the media often provides people with what is perceived as social reality, which in turn serve as a guide to action.

We have shown that this image of social reality is one where aggressiveness and violence are closely linked with material success, hero worship and sexual attractiveness, and degradation of the intrinsic worth of the individual.

We have suggested that the media, with some exceptions, present characters that are brittle, one-dimensional and uncaring.

Therefore, while recognizing that the media may provide a safety valve for hostility that would otherwise be expressed violently, we recommend –

1. That the intrinsic value of human worth be always respected. This applies to fictionalized programs as well as newscasts, etc.
2. That a healthy proportion of media time be devoted to programs where reality testing can occur, as in programs presenting a positive image, or people dealing with problems in a way that leads to personal growth.
3. That violence should not be linked with material or sexual success, or should not be glamorized.
4. That where violence is the subject of comedy, it should be obviously fake (as in *Get Smart*).

Mary E. Mainwaring

Helen D. Saravanamuttoo

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## **Judge Dean Hamlyn Ottawa**

... the audience (at our recent meeting) was composed of representatives from the Ottawa Police, Nepean Police, Gloucester Police, Vanier Police, Juvenile Probation, the Crown Attorney, the legal profession, the Department of Health and Welfare, the Court staff, the Observation Home staff and three members of the general public ...

It seems to go without question that certain members of society are affected by what they see in the media and the effect often takes the form of overt, deviate behaviour. Given this proposition, the question seems to be: what alternatives can be provided to society in general to allow a counter-balance to this intrusion?

Obviously, censorship could be an answer. However, in my opinion, imposed censorship by government is not satisfactory because of the basic infringement on individual freedom. Thus, one viable alternative may be the provision of guidelines to aid the general public in what they wish to see or read or observe; the concept being that voluntary, individual constraint with the assistance of guidelines is much better than imposed constraint by way of legislation. I believe it is the responsibility of parents and guardians to censor material that reaches their charges; however, I do not believe that such censorship is the responsibility of the State. Moreover, I believe it is the responsibility of the communications industry to censor itself within guidelines; I do not believe it is the responsibility of the State.

It is, however, my belief that the responsibility to provide guidelines lies with government in consultation with the public and other interested bodies.

If the voluntariness does not work, then perhaps imposed controls with review procedures, may be consistent, but this, I would hope, would not be necessary because of the high cost to individual freedom.

In order to implement such a program, it may be necessary to launch a massive education program to give fundamental information as to why and how. This, I submit, is only one alter-

native and may be of limited effect, but I believe it is worth the effort.

*Judge Dean Hamlyn  
Provincial Court Judge  
(Family Division)*

## Marilyn Belanger Hanmer

The observance of violent acts, whether by animals or people, can do no one any good. The harm done can be negligible or range into intense damage. The individual character involved makes the difference.

We all try to raise our children the best we can – however, we have no guarantees that their characters will be able to withstand the constant outpouring of violence (and smut) that comes from our television, magazines (handily on display at child's eye view), and movies (even at a children's movie, the previews can be chilling or degrading).

If you are very choosy about the television your children watch, you find conflicts among adults. It requires much determination to remove children from the television area while their father watches a forbidden show. It can cause family arguments! Since we choose not to have smutty magazines in our home, we do not think it right for our children to be exposed to them in grocery or confectionary stores. This is a form of insidious violence against women – one of the most skilfully handled and carefully planned. Men's tastes be damned! They clamour for these books, the way women clamour for the cute new products that are being constantly dumped on the market. It's all a sham. Movies are also a phony "reflection" of the viewer's tastes. We are never certain whether a show will be offensive or not, so we rarely go. Aside from the obvious overkill in movies (and that includes the super-violent ones like *A Clockwork Orange*) there is the strong anti-female violence running through most of them. Females are used, and disposed of as handily as bullets in a gun. As stated before, when a child attends a nature or child-type movie, you can be certain that in the previews there will be at least two movies advertised that will be offensive to your child, or frighten him.

Needless to say, the large part of our violent entertainment originates in the United States. This is the best case anyone can make for being much more particular about filtering U.S. "entertainment" across the border, and for sponsoring Canadian shows.

Until a person sees the effect of a frightening show on his/her small child, he/she can firmly believe in non-censorship. After that, he/she can see the validity of protection for some people against anti-people "entertainment".

*Marilyn Belanger*



## Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario

We are concerned with violence in any form and particularly when there is a danger that it might affect our children whether it is on television, radio, the press, in sports, in protests, verbally, or whatever form it takes if it is unjustified or unnecessary.

The over-abundance of violent and sensational items of news with little publicity of items of positive accomplishments gives the erroneous impression that our society is ALL violent, ALL immoral and without any standards. Many television programs also substantiate this. We would therefore like to see positive steps taken to arrest or change these trends and would like to recommend the following measures:

1. legislation be enacted which explicitly lays down the guidelines for violence permitted on television. This would include regulations for curbing violence in movies and newscasts and in advertisements. This is necessary because the people involved in television, news reporting and editing and advertisers have not shown themselves to be responsible or to have the welfare of the people at heart. (Otherwise why did the necessity arise of having the commission on violence appointed?) Such legislation would be acceptable as the legislation regarding 60 per cent Canadian content on television and, indeed, could be tied in with it.
2. the CRTC be very strict about renewing licences of stations that violate the law in this regard.
3. as an attempt to more strictly control the type of local news being shown, that the schools of journalism be directed by the government to stress in their courses the great sense of responsibility that journalists have in being truthful and accurate in their reporting and devoid of over-sensationalism or personal opinion. It is our belief that the latter should be reserved for the editorial or letters to the editor.
4. incentives (tax reductions, grants or even plaque awards) be given for alternate kinds of programs that make for good family viewing, such as *The Sound of Music* and *The Love Story* and nature and educational films.
5. where programs of an excessively violent nature with rough, tough talk and actions are permitted, that they be placed in very late time slots.

*Ms. Bernice B. Noblitt,  
Past President*

## The Good Companions Senior Citizens Centre Ottawa

We think that it is the senior citizens, children and teens that are the most affected (by violence). Senior citizens may like police stories and murder mysteries but they feel there are too many gory episodes. Many senior citizens who live alone see the violence and are almost afraid to go to bed. One especially disturbing scene showed a woman's mutilated body with an arm here and a leg lying somewhere else.

Senior citizens often become the victims of television violence, also, we think purse snatching and mugging on the streets and the showing of break-ins where senior citizens live alone make them fear to leave their premises or walk the streets alone.

Senior citizens also fear for their grandchildren and wonder what effect this violence will have on them.

*Mrs. Eleanor Mattice  
Social Action Committee*

## The Town of Paris

At the request of Mayor Bawcutt, the Council of the Municipality and with the cooperation of some of the citizens of Paris, this brief on Violence in the Communications Industry has been prepared.

In order to ascertain the views of the citizens, two forms were prepared for distribution. Letters, which included forms, explaining the need for participation, were sent to various organizations and schools. *The Paris Star* and *The Brantford Expositor* published articles giving details of our brief and requesting input. The forms were available through the Paris Town Office and the Paris Public Library. Anyone who did not wish to use a form was encouraged to either write me a note with his/her views or to phone me. Classes from several of the elementary schools and Paris District High School participated. Copies of the forms are attached.

### Television:

In tabulating the results of the survey for the children, I discovered that many children begin watching television at 7 a.m. Many indicate that they eat their meals while watching television. They watch until 9 and 10 in the evening. These children ranged in age from six to ten years of age. The hours of television watched in one week:

- One child under ten hours per week
- 20 children between one to 20 hours per week.
- Five children between 21 to 30 hours per week.
- One child between 31 to 40 hours per week.
- Four children between 41 to 50 hours per week.

Television is here to stay. Almost every home has one or more televisions, and now many are in colour, which puts an entirely different perspective on the program. I realize you have been told before that children under five watch three to four hours of television a day, and that by the time a young person has graduated from high school he/she will have viewed 15,000 hours of television. If you only look at the amount of time spent in viewing, you must be concerned with the effect this will have on our young people. Some people would have you believe that television programs have little influence on your behaviour. If that is so, why then is the 30-second commercial so

important? The companies that sponsor programs use their commercials to change the viewers' buying behaviour. If 30-second commercials can change your buying habits or minds, what will be the experience of a child who spends as many as six hours a day, year in and year out, before the television? This cumulative effect is what makes television different from reading books or going to movies.

More parents need to imitate the mother of Dennis the Menace in a recent cartoon. Dennis is ensconced in front of the television with pop and popcorn; his mother clicks off the television and says, "And now an important message from your sponsor – GO OUTSIDE AND PLAY". How many parents know what their children are watching? How many times a week do they watch a program with their children? What effect does television have on their family life? Does it improve it, cause problems, or have little or no effect? If parents do not approve of a programme what action do they take? Do they (a) turn off the set, (b) report the programme to the Children's Broadcast Institute, 50 Gould Street, c/o RTA, Toronto, M5B 1E8, a non-profit organization for the betterment of children's programming.

There seems to be a trend toward shows depicting violence. According to an article in *The Journal of Communication*, Winter 1976, "Over the entire week of television programming on three major networks, a total 2,796 violent episodes were observed during 376.08 hours of monitoring, yielding an average rate of 7.43 violent episodes per hour". The more we human beings are exposed to violent acts – sitting back effortlessly in the comfort of our living rooms – the more we can accept them without complaint. The more familiar these acts become – the less terrible or frightening, indeed the easier it is for us to endure or even enjoy them. They become a part of us. We eventually come to participate in them with our hearts and minds.

The producers of the programs say they are only giving the public what they want. This implies that the public knows what it wants – also that public is an "it", instead of a "they". Somehow, producers and their sponsors must be encouraged to raise the viewers' standards. When the mass communications operate on a compara-

tively low standard, the majority of the population are never encourage to reach toward anything like their full capacity of intelligence. Our education should be encouraged by an enriched form of television fare. Certainly, television is for entertainment – but is this its only purpose?

The government is encouraging us to be healthy and happy by Participaction. Why not have programs teaching us “how to” swim, cross country ski, garden, play golf, hockey, basketball? Subjects are unlimited. Let’s not just watch the professional do it, but have them show us how.

With the closing of health facilities, and doctors no longer making house calls, why not have programs on health care? Health care is of paramount importance to us individually, as a community and as a nation.

Why do so many people write to Ann Landers for help with their marriage, family life, and personal problems? Many write to her because they don’t know where to turn; others because they are too embarrassed to turn to anyone else. Why not have programs dealing with marriage, family life and child care? Professional actors and actresses could act out situations; then social workers, psychologists, doctors, could analyze and try to arrive at a solution to the problem. Viewers could be encouraged to get into the act by phone-in lines to the program.

Those who watched *The National Dream*, were not aware of this being a history lesson. Why not more history lessons such as that?

Television is only as good or as bad as we, the public, allow it to be. We have a right to expect and demand that television programs aim at the highest ideals with the most creativity and attractiveness possible.

### **Print:**

As far as books and magazines are concerned we choose what will come into our homes. If we feel magazines do not meet our standards, we can write to the magazine, or, if we feel strongly enough after protesting, we can cancel our subscription.

The prime job of newspapers is to report news, good or bad. Unfortunately, most of it seems to be violent because of the world in which we live.

Newspapers should be careful not to report an opinion as fact. The public has a right to know all the pertinent facts. There is no need to dwell on the sensational. Sometimes it is not *what* has been printed, but what has been omitted, that causes a distorted view. It is the responsibility of the newspaper to report all the divergent opinions on any one matter, and then it is the responsibility of the reader to read carefully and think through these opinions.

We are too prone to read the headlines, which may bear no resemblance to what is in the column, and base our opinion on them. Care should be taken when using photographs. A picture is worth a thousand words – for good or bad. Good taste should be used in the selection and printing. No consideration should be given to licensing the press. Controls should be placed on the papers by the readers. Here again, we may write to the editor of the newspaper or to the Ontario Press Council, 151 Slater Street, Suite 798, Ottawa, K1P 5H3, or, in the case of *The Toronto Star*, to the Bureau of Accuracy.

### **Radio:**

Radio seems to have passed through the violent stage, when cowboy and Indian programs were the rage. But even those programmes did not have the impact they have on television. Radio programming on many stations seems to be trying to be the social conscience of the community. News, information on a variety of topics, education, inspiration and entertainment are an everyday diet.

### **Advertisements:**

Advertisements in the media can hardly be classed as violent, except occasionally those depicting some movies. But advertisements in all of the media downgrade women and people of foreign extraction. So often women are portrayed as ninnies on soap commercials, burbling about ring-around-the-collar, swooning housewives on degrading games shows. Every time I see the Speedy Muffler advertisement on television, it makes me cringe. I can’t imagine how immigrants must feel when they see it. Why can’t we get back

to advertisements that give us facts, and therefore good reasons, why we should buy the product.

Surely no one is so naive as to believe that because they drink, smoke, drive, use certain soaps, deodorants, etc., that life will become glamorous and fulfilling?

Unfortunately many firms that advertise on television seem to be more concerned with the number of viewers than the content of the programs that they sponsor. If viewers would write to the sponsoring company, protesting the violent type of program and indicating that they would boycott the product, and encourage relatives and friends to do likewise, we might obtain some results. I don't feel that these companies want to promote or sponsor violence, they simply haven't thought of what is happening.

### Recordings:

Recordings are a reflection of what is happening in society, rather than trying to impose values on society. Just as ballads were sung at one time to tell of matters of love, war, or heroic deeds, so today they tell us how our youth feels about the world in which they live.

The ballad was a vehicle for expressing the views of the balladeer as to what was happening in society. Today it is the stars, rock bands, et cetera, expressing their views of what is happening in our society. The beat is different, the rhyme is different, but essentially the message is the same. One further element has been added – that of protest. The protest is against war involvement, race hatred, and the materialistic values of modern society.

### Cartoons and Comic Strips:

Cartoons for the young television viewer should be full of fun – a time to laugh. Unfortunately, the makers of many television cartoons seem to think the only way they can accomplish this is by a constant barrage of cartoon characters being hit, trampled on, chased, et cetera. According to a study done by Gerbner in 1969, there was a violent episode at least every two minutes in all Saturday morning cartoon programming. Surely, there is something else that can make us laugh. Television is not the culprit, but what appears on

television. We need to demand programming that can be a positive influence on our young viewers.

I always thought of the comics in newspapers as being that part of the newspaper especially for the young – and the young at heart. According to the dictionary, a comic strip is a “series of drawings, sometimes humorous, presenting an adventure”. Many of the comic strips are definitely geared to adults. Some do not meet the above criteria, for example *Kisses* and *Crock*. I find *Kisses* downgrades women and doesn't even do it in a humorous way! Let's have more comics that children can really enjoy.

### Conclusion:

We are told “Be your own boss”, “Do your own thing”, “Be your own Liquor Control Board”, so why not a slogan, “Be your own Media Critic”? These are channels in some areas open to us now to make our feelings and ideas known, particularly in the area of the press. We, the public, must take the responsibility of using these channels effectively. Where there is no effective organization to hear and do something about our complaints, we must lobby to see that a channel is created.

We must take the initiative and the responsibility.

For example:

Would it be possible to have a media ombudsman who would listen to, investigate, and report on complaints about media violence?

Would it be possible to have a rating system for television shows that would be printed in television guides so that parents could check to see what shows are suitable for children?

Would it be possible to initiate a program in elementary schools which would continue on through high schools that would help children to understand and evaluate the programs on television? This would help to raise the level of programming.

Remember your responsibility – Be Your Own Media Critic.

*The Town of Paris*



Please help us to gather information to be used in a brief to the Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry.

How the Commission defines Violence:

Violence is action which intrudes painfully or harmfully into the physical, psychological or social well-being of persons or groups.

Violence or its effects may range from trivial to catastrophic.

Violence may be obvious or subtle.

It may arise naturally or by human design.

Violence may take place against persons or against property.

It may be justified or unjustified, or justified by some standards and not by others.

It may be real or symbolic.

Violence may be sudden or gradual.

The Nature of Media Violence:

Violence depicted in film, television, sound, print or life performance, is not necessarily the same as violence in real life.

Things not violent in reality may be violent in their portrayal.

Violence presented in the media may reach large numbers of people, whereas real violence may not.

The media may use many artificial devices to lessen or to amplify its emotional and social effects.

Violence depicted may do harm the original violence may not have done - or it may have no impact at all.

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

Age: 12-13 ☐ 14-16 ☐ 17-18 ☐ 19-25 ☐ 26-40 ☐

Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐ 41-60 ☐ 61 & ☐ over

We would appreciate knowing who you are, but it is not necessary to fill in the following:

Name .....By MARCH 15, 1976 return to:  
Deputy Reeve Norma E. Leighfield,  
Address .....Town of Paris,  
59 Grand River St.N.,Paris,Ontario

## TELEVISION

### General Guidelines:

Please rate the programs you watch on a scale from 10 down to 1 keeping in mind the following standards:

1. Does it appeal to the audience for whom intended?
2. Does it meet people's needs for entertainment and action?
3. Does it add to one's understanding and appreciation of himself, others, the world?
4. Does it encourage worthwhile ideals, values and beliefs? (family, life, etc.)
5. Does the program stimulate constructive activities?
6. Does it have artistic qualities?
7. Is the commercial acceptable?
8. Is there violence aimed at specific groups, the elderly, women, children, etc.?

### PROGRAM RATING CHART

Name of program, station, network	Length of Program & No. of commercials	Description of program	10,9,8,7 good	654 o.k.	321 poor	comments
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						

Did you view these programs on black/white t.v. ☐ colour t.v. ☐

Name ..... Address.....

## RADIO

### General Guidelines:

- Please rate the programs to which you listened on a scale from 10 down to 1 keeping in mind the following standards:
1. Does it appeal to the audience for whom intended?
  2. Does it meet people's needs for entertainment and action?
  3. Does it add to one's understanding and appreciation of himself, others, the world?
  4. Does it encourage worthwhile ideals, values and beliefs? (family life, etc.)
  5. Does the program stimulate constructive activities?
  6. Does it have artistic qualities?
  7. Is the commercial acceptable?
  8. Is there violence aimed at specific groups - the elderly, women, children, etc.?

### PROGRAM RATING CHART

Name of program, station, network	Length of program & No. of commercials	Description of program	10,9,8,7 good	6,5,4 o.k.	3,2,1 poor	comments
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						

Name ..... Address .....

## NEWSPAPERS

### General Guidelines:

Please rate the following on a scale from 10 down to 1 keeping in mind the following standards:

1. Has the event been reported accurately?  
(by on site observation, comparison with other papers or media)?
2. Do the headlines/headings give an accurate indication of the column?
3. Is there undue violence depicted?

NAME OF PAPER: ..... Date.....from.....to.....  
(month)

NEWS	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.	Comments
NEWS							
SPORTS							
COMICS							
ENTERTAINMENT							

NAME OF PAPER ..... Date .....

	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.	Comments
NEWS							
SPORTS							
COMICS							
ENTERTAINMENT							

Name ..... Address .....



## MAGAZINES

### General Guidelines:

Please rate the following on a scale from 10 down to 1 keeping in mind the following standards:

1. Does the magazine encourage worthwhile ideals, values, beliefs?
2. Does the magazine encourage social and political reforms?
3. Does the magazine encourage a sense of community?
4. Is there violence aimed at specific groups - the elderly, women, children, etc.?

Name of Magazine	Article	Stories	Photographs	Cartoons	Ads	Comments
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						

Name ..... Address .....

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7-8 a.m.							
8-9 a.m.							
9-10 a.m.							
10-11 a.m.							
11-12 a.m.							
12-1 p.m.							
1-2 p.m.							
2-3 p.m.							
3-4 p.m.							
4-5 p.m.							
5-6 p.m.							
6-7 p.m.							
7-8 p.m.							
8-9 p.m.							
9-10 p.m.							

What is your favourite T.V. Program?

What program do you like least?

Age: ☐

Girl: ☐

Grade: ☐

Boy: ☐

Suggested Key:  
watched t.v.



read



played outside

slept



went to friends



did homework  
went out with parents  
ate



played with brother/sister  
played alone inside



School  
A.B.C.

Yoi!

## St. John's Presbyterian Church Kapuskasing

It is recognized that it is the responsibility of parents to monitor suitable television programs and outside films for children, to guide them as they grow to make intelligent, responsible choices.

However, television is available to all, and unfortunately in most homes it is used to excess. The great power of this medium is being abused by excessive use of various forms of violence rather than constant application to life's enrichment. The problem of suitable alternative programming is a very difficult one and one in which the public should be consulted in some fair and competent way.

Violence is a fact of life but overexposure of unnecessary violence, be it openly physical or covertly psychological, is to be condemned. Its excessive use by the media, especially television and films, purely for sensational effect and financial gain, can produce no enrichment in our society.

An insidious form of violence of concern is encroachment on the privacy of the individual at times of tragedy. To feed on the grief of others, again for effect, is deplorable. Privacy of the individual at times of great stress or suffering should be respected at all times.

We ask what research is being done on the effects of television on children exposed to it from the cradle – who have no voice or choice – but who hear and see and are affected by the programming their elders watch? By the time they are X-years old have they been subconsciously programmed for life? What are we doing to our children, our values, our nation?

Who are we?

We are women aged 20-65. We are mothers, aunts and grandmothers. We are teachers, public health nurses, school nurses, secretaries and homemakers. We have children aged 32 months to 17 years. Why are we concerned?

We are concerned first of all because we heard about the Commission. This started us thinking, not new thoughts for we had wondered about violence on television before. As a group we were now able to focus and discuss our fears and our

concerns. We were also able to clarify and compare them.

As a group we surveyed ourselves and found out that children watch as many hours of television a week as they spend in school. Where did our attention focus?

Primarily we focused on television as it is in every home and affects every age group from two to 80. We felt concern only for our families but for the community at large as we take the responsibility to be our 'brother's keeper' seriously. What is the problem on television?

First and foremost the problem here in Kapuskasing is the lack of choice. Can we edit for our families if there is no alternative? In Kapuskasing in the winter after 5.30 p.m. it is too dark and cold for children to be out; therefore, we must emphasize the hours from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Locally both channels carry a movie from 6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. or 8.00 p.m., most of which are not fit for children, while *The Waltons* or *Charlie Brown* specials and other child-oriented or educational program are slotted at later times. This forces the parents who are concerned into two undesirable choices:

1. turn the television off,
2. have the children stay up late.

Secondly, concern focused in on the televising of news; especially the 11.00 p.m. report. Some of our group have noticed among elderly friends and relations depression and confusion after the late news. It is felt by our group that this is caused by the overly dramatic and sensational way the news is presented. We feel there is an overemphasis in details of gore, suffering and method.

What do we want?

1. In the 4.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. time slot shows that are:
  - a) educational - e.g., *Animal Kingdom*, *Nature of Things*
  - b) family shows - e.g., *Waltons*, *Little House on the Prairie*
  - c) dramatic - e.g., *Emergency*, *Doctors Hospital*, *Forest Rangers*Even certain crime shows - e.g., *McLeod* or *Columbo* which do not dwell on gore or

violence and use legal means to apprehend suspects.

2. We want factual concise reporting of news events of national importance; not suicides or local murders. We do not want films that dwell on people suffering physically after an accident or tragedy nor pictures of people dying.

*The Presbyterian Women's Fellowship*

## Douglas C. Trowell, CKEY Limited Toronto

I'm going to start with the several questions that were contained in your letter of January 8, 1976.

1. You asked *what our story selections and play policies were and how specific violent and non-violent stories are chosen.*

Well, violence *as such* has absolutely *nothing* to do with our *story* selection and so-called "play" policy. (It might be helpful to you to read our existing Editorial News and Information Policy, a copy of which has been provided. It's only three paragraphs long, but I think it will give you an idea of the basis for our news operation and specifically how *we* expect news judgment to be applied to *all* our news activities by all *our* various editors and broadcasters.)

News judgment decides *any* story *and* the position of that story. Our *style* determines the manner of *writing* it and presenting it. (Basically we're interested in presenting *predominantly* local news and our target for that is 60 per cent of the content in *any* given week to be local. Of course this *has* to vary, depending on the ebb and flow of news, which I'm sure you can appreciate.)

As to what news is, I think anybody would agree that it has to do with whatever is *new* in terms of information or general human interest. News . . . news is what's happening.

We don't go looking for violent stories, but the world is full of violent stories which are news, and we cover some of them. If the story is of general public interest and concern, (and *we* have to make *that* decision, we have to make the decision as to whether or not a particular news story *is* of broad interest and concern), then we'll take the responsibility for that selection.

2. As to self-censorship or internal codes of good taste, respect for privacy, violence, I'll take those one at a time, I think.

Good taste is really based on common sense plus our own characteristics and personalities as individuals and the personality and characteristics of our radio station. Now, the station's personality is dependant upon the characteristics of the



audience and in our particular case, we're interested in attracting and holding a broadly representative group of adult listeners.

As for a respect for privacy, certainly we have respect for privacy. We don't want to invade anyone's, unnecessarily or brutally, but unquestionably, in the coverage of the news and the digging out of information, you have to be both assertive and somewhat aggressive because, if you're not, you may well get stick-handled right out of the game.

Certainly, whenever we do interview by telephone, we *always* identify the fact that this is an interview and that it is intended for broadcast!

As to violence, again I think we come back to the idea of taste, which follows again from common sense and the impact of our own taste and values. So the taste is our taste really and we're prepared to stand on that and justify what we say and do. We certainly have no wish to sensationalize or emotionally charge a story simply to appeal to the baser instincts of people, but (and I emphasize this) we certainly would never avoid a story because it was violent, either. We'd still give it what we consider to be the appropriate treatment for our audience, and I think that's where you have to leave it.

3. You ask what our reliance on imported versus domestic news-gathering services is. For the moment, for international and American news coverage of a general nature, we rely on CBS News. However, we do send our own people outside the country now on various special assignments and stories of importance, stories of major general interest and concern to our Toronto-centred audience. In our wire services, we also have a certain amount of material which comes in from outside.

Our news style is one which is simply generic to our people, that is, the people who listen to us and the people who work for us. Our language, our phrasing, our pronunciation are all reflections of our people, their backgrounds, their academic exposure and the like.

As to priorities, content and violence-relatedness, as I said earlier we're targeted at 60 per cent

local news and from that position develops the make-up of all our newscasts, all our assignments.

We do our damndest to provide people with what people are interested in. What they're mystified about. What they're frustrated by. What they're amused with, and so on. Violence or violent stories are selected on their news value and not on their violence quotient.

4. You asked about advertising influence on content. Well, I can tell you this – there is absolutely none in any specific sense. If you want to suggest that the content of the entire station is advertiser-influenced simply because we depend on advertising, I suppose you could say yes. But then who isn't? We're all after audience but there is no way in which an advertiser will tell us what to run or what not to run. Even commercials have to be acceptable to us before we run them.

We're a business, we're profitable and we're after broad-based mass circulation and adults with our AM station CKEY. (And you may or may not know, we have applied to the CRTC for an FM license here in Toronto for a station called CFYI, "for your information", which will be Canada's first all-news all-the-time radio station, and I can tell you that in the case of that operation there is no way we're going to have broad-based, mass circulation. At CFYI we'll be going after a fairly slender slice of the radio audience but it will be a very, very important one.) Back to 'EY – we're seeking a broad-based mass circulation and our programming is intended to attract and hold that kind and size of audience and grow it even larger, but again no specific advertiser, no group of them have even the slightest influence on our content in any specific sense.

As to our advertising content policies I assume that you're asking about the sound and the kind of advertising which we carry rather than the number of announcements which is already delineated and controlled by CRTC regulation. Well, again, we have our own advertising policies which are based on common sense. *We* know what our audience is. *We* know what our audience is likely to be interested in and certainly we know what our audience is likely to be turned off by. I can tell you we're just not about to let that happen

to us. They are our whole business. So we simply have to keep our advertising content and sound consistent with our audience likes and dislikes and I can tell you that our programming is extremely successful. It is well received and we're growing audience by leaps and bounds. Our policies in terms of advertising are completely arbitrary and almost entirely unilateral. They are subjective, based on objective information about our audience. We do adhere to the Canadian Advertising Advisory Board, Advertising Standards Council policies of *truthful* advertising and to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters policies on children's advertising.

5. You ask what our policies, practices, philosophy and so on regarding reportage and emphasis on violent news, are and I simply have to say that we don't have a policy but we do have a practice. That practice is based on a philosophy of reportage which not only covers but uncovers events.

It is our belief that it is better for people to know, than not to know, what's going on; that people have a right to know and furthermore a responsibility to know, if they are really to be good citizens. If what we know is unpleasant or undesirable it does not alter our belief that they ought to know about its existence. It is simply not the journalist's role to say something good or bad about any subject, but to report what is true. It is not for the reporter to present a positive or negative view of any subject, only an accurate one.

There are always critics and one possible way to appease them might be for the reporter to consider whether she, her critics, or the public will like what she reports. There is an endless list of special-interest groups which would no doubt welcome such self-censorship, the suppression or alteration of facts that might disturb or offend some group or individual. That would be beautiful public relations, but it is not good journalism.

As citizens, if we want to change something, we first have to know it's there, identify the problem, then make a personal evaluation and decision as to whether it's good or bad or neutral. If it's bad and we want to change it or prevent it or curb it,

we're obliged to do that by being as politically persuasive as we can be, but we sure won't make it all go away by banning any word of it.

If a mirror reflects an ugly face you can't blame the mirror, as Gogol said.

Edith Wharton said: "There are two ways of spreading light; one is to be the candle, the other is to be the mirror that reflects it." Those two ideas are very much a part of how I feel about all our news activities and our information broadcasting. We have to tell it. We have to tell all about it and we have to do that in the belief that people will make their own basically sound decisions and that they're quite capable of being entrusted to do just that. If it's violence we're talking about, then, yes, we'll cover a violent story and we'll play it appropriately. That may depend on the nature as well as the extent of the act or event. That's an editorial value judgment. It's up to the editors and the news director to make.

6. I wasn't quite sure what was meant by pro-social policies but I think that what you're looking for are ways that media can assist people cope and adjust with life. Again, I don't think that there's any way we can say that there is a policy, but there's a practice. We have an adult audience, they're well educated, they're curious, they're involved in many cases. We treat them accordingly. We treat them as adults.

As for younger listeners, we simply don't attract them. That is a conscious decision on our part. We're not out to. But, if we were attracting a young audience, then presumably all the components, all the elements of the programming, would have to be consistent with that. Surely to goodness, common sense would direct it. It would me anyway.

We're not unaware that children may well be in earshot of what we're doing and that's all part of our consideration because that is a consideration of our audience. They may be sitting around the table or driving as a family group in a car and we have to treat our material in keeping with that and keeping that always in mind. Again, taste, common sense, the sensibilities of our audience, including those who may be quite young, are

determinants, but it doesn't mean we hide information from them.

7. You asked about our accountability. Well, we don't sit down with great bureaucratic forms for our people to fill out to show what they've done and what they haven't done, but we sure as hell listen to the radio station all the time and we're very concerned with it. It is, after all, an extension of us as individuals and we don't want an inappropriate extension of ourselves. I think that's again reflected in the kinds of people we are, the kinds of people we hire, the character of our leadership, the manner in which they participate in the activity of the radio station and its news service. We're all listening all the time and we're always evaluating. Furthermore, we listen to our listeners! We keep a complete phone log which every one of us sees within a day or so after it is in. In fact, we have a whole department which is devoted entirely to listeners' service, taking phone calls, passing the information along, checking on things, recording reactions, both pleasant and unpleasant, pro and con. We are responsible, responsive and accountable.
8. Research: I don't know of any research that's been done on the effect of news. I do know that there's plenty of empirical evidence that the suppression or deprivation of news and information has profound and materially bad effects on society.

We also know, from our own attitudinal research, that people most definitely want every bit of information about everything imaginable that they can get their minds around. News and information is important to them and, and in that sense, the effect of news is to satisfy our audience's curiosity. In that endeavour, we want to be both credible and creditable.

9. Media Violence. You ask what my assessment is in terms of the implications for society of media violence. Well, my assessment of the implications for society is this: I remain as yet unconvinced, unpersuaded, that violence depicted on radio, on television, in films, in books, in comic books, in the Bible, is supportive, let alone causal, to violence in society at large. But I do know that

there is a body of literature in the behavioural sciences dealing with the causes of violence, which indicates that things like poverty, crowding, overcrowding, competitiveness and the internalizing of a competitive ideal do contribute to violence as they do to other things like aberrant behaviour in the use of alcohol, drugs, gambling, as examples.

I think violence in media is more symptomatic. It is a manifestation of our social state. Violence has always been a part of the human condition, it seems. It does back a long way before television or radio or telephones or the printing press or movable type or any of the modern communications facilities we know. I think what does happen is that violence gets transmitted, along with all the other things, both instantaneously and simultaneously, so that nobody has to wait for the pony express to bring them the bad news – cooling it in the process. (I think we only have to go back a few hours ago to the violence reported in this city. You only have to go back a few years to violence in Vietnam, back to World War II concentration camps (including our own concentration camps here in Canada), back to fairy tales and children's books designed to frighten children into behaving in a certain way, back to witch hunts, back to the Inquisition, back to folklore, sagas, songs, legends, back to the crucifixion, back to the Bible.) I don't think it does any good to say that it does not exist. It lurks in everyone.

We've all felt it – we've all been violent for that matter, and, while it may vary in degree and extent, none of us is exempt. We're all, from time to time, aggressive: aiming to hurt someone else and sometimes, unfortunately, being extremely successful at it.

If that is true, and it seems to me it is, how do we all manage to survive? How is it that human beings prevail???? How is violence controlled? It seems to me that it's controlled by the development of civilization, its culture and socialization, and that communication is very much an important part of that process. If we want to change things and alter things and control things, we do it through legislation and custom once we know what it is. And if communication today is faster, then change should also be faster. And it is!

So much for the questions.



In your Commission's terms of reference the term "exploitation" is used and I think it's important to understand the meaning of that. There are three basic dictionary meanings:

1. utilization for profit;
2. selfish utilization;
3. combined and varied use of public relations and advertising to promote something;

Forget number three. It's not relevant. Take one and two. "Exploitation" in those terms, seldom fits radio and radio news. Violence is not an ingredient to be delivered because it is violence. It may very well be a part of what's going on for a particular audience and, if it is, they're going to find it one way or the other. Certainly in our kind of radio, violence is not an ingredient to be delivered because it is violence.

Some of the submissions you've received have advocated various forms of censorship, an idea to which I am opposed, because, in my mind, no matter how great you are, how learned you are, how sensitive you are, what a super person you are, there is no way you're going to convince me that you know what's best for me as an individual. I want to reserve that right and that judgment to myself and I feel that if I'm going to reserve it to myself I have to provide it as an opportunity for every other individual.

I am particularly disturbed when I hear suggestions of that kind of censorship thinking being used to place a curb on news. I am in full accord with the idea of indicating through a rating system of some kind, what the content of a particular entertainment show on television is, for example, or movies. It would be a help, not only in assisting parents in parental control, but even for adults making decisions about what they want to see and what they don't want to see – which may not be evident in the simple title or in a review or whatever. Then people can use it if they want to.

No, it is not the function of a news organization to give pleasure, but to give facts. The function of the entertainer is to give pleasure; of the journalist to get as close to the truth as possible and to report it without regard for whom it may or may not please.

Please understand, I am not arguing in favor of the use of, and exploitation of, violence for purposes of entertainment. I'm dealing with it in terms of journalism only, and I think we would be doing ourselves irreparable damage as a society if we were to argue for the banning of violence, (whatever that may be by whose-ever definition) in journalistic enterprise and endeavour. I would seriously resist any suggestion that there ought to be any kind of censorship involved in news presentation. That would be hiding the truth. Ultimately, the sufferer in that kind of a situation is society – the people.

The dilemmas which a reporter or a journalist face are sharper than anyone thinks. They are not easy choices. Are we right or wrong? On what grounds would one omit the results of crime and violence and its grim recital? How do we avoid confusing passion with principle? Would we be better journalists if we ignored or obscured violence and the results of violence? Violence exists. It occurs and takes place all over our city. People are hurt; they bleed; they die.

Is it a question of manipulation? What is manipulative? – reporting which seeks to include *all* aspects of a subject, or which deals with it selectively at the whim of the reporter, or out of fear of critics and special interests? (Criticism might well be valid if violence were irrelevant to living in the twentieth century in a built-up urban area, but it seems to be almost an integral and undeniable part of society today.)

I don't know the answers to these questions because they change with every situation and set of circumstances and with time. But, it is up to us to find the best answers we, ourselves, can find. No one else can or should try to do that for us, in my opinion.

I just don't want to be part of anything that would contribute to deceiving people about the state of the world, because I do not hold to the view that it is a good thing for them. I could not be part of a conspiracy to obscure items that someone thinks should be hidden, and I think that the suggestion that increasing public acceptance of such an idea justifies it, is *all the more reason* to be alert, and militant about the gradual erosion of free expression which has a terrible way of rolling up momentum and mass as it progresses in terms



of the removal of individual liberty from each of us.

That is taking control and to me there is nothing more violent than taking control of someone else. *That. . .that is* violence. No matter *how* well-meaning the intent. *That's* the kind of violence I am concerned about most.

*Douglas C. Trowell*  
*President*

## **Mary Miller Rexdale**

First, I would like to compliment you and the Ontario Government for your efforts in the study of this phenomenon of violence in our society. You have been hearing about the effects on our lives from people from all walks of life, including many parents and educators. I would like to bring to your attention certain educational material which perhaps you have not heard about.

If it can be said that we are the product of our environment, and many studies of human behaviour indicate this is so, then violence in the media, particularly television, which constitutes such a large force/part of the environment for so many people, especially children, must indeed have an effect on the kind of people we become, our sense of values and our behaviour.

Yet I fear that our children, who are most vulnerable to the violence on television, are subjected to another dose of it in the classroom. The apparent greater tolerance of violence on the part of the public generally has crept into the very sensitive and vital area of selection of educational material. It would appear that in the rush to replace the so called "staid and dull" books once used in schools, educators, following the lead from below the border, have been choosing material which closely resembles television programming – mainly high impact, fast-moving and violent. This may well be the most harmful violence of all, because, to a degree, there is a certain unreality to what is seen on television, while the things you learn at school are supposed to be rather more factual and to carry the stamp of approval. So when violent material is used in the classroom, it tends to reinforce and legitimize in the mind of the child the violence he saw on television last night – as well as in the material he is using.

The books I would like to discuss are called *Thrust and Focus*, the first two of a series of six in the Galaxy series: *Thrust*, *Focus*, *Vanguard*, *Perspectives*, *Accent U.S.A.*, and *Compass*, published by Scott Foresman and Co. in Glenview Ill., and distributed here by Gage. These books were "discovered" by our educators at an educational conference in Washington.

Last year, when my son was in Grade Seven he brought home *Thrust*, the first in the series. It was new and glossy and as I picked it up (actually, after being asked to do so by another concerned parent) and flipped the pages, it fell open near the middle and I began to read. The story was gripping and frightening and turned out to be an episode of the television series *Twilight Zone* – a story with a vigilante theme. I wondered why the book opened where it did and found that these were the most-worn pages in the book. Further perusal revealed that there were several stories about Indian fighting and the American West, including a lynching party in Texas; American secret agents; a case history of a court case in Alabama and assorted other stories. Sound like television fare? I was alarmed at the number of stories in which a gun was used, as a weapon or just a prop. I objected to the Board of Education (Etobicoke) about the use of this book on the basis of the violence depicted as well as the strong American character.

I was given several reasons why this book is used in our classrooms:

1. No other suitable book is available;
2. The book is primarily for children with reading problems who require this high interest, fast moving material to sustain interest;
3. These books are especially valuable for good readers who have a good grasp of vocabulary, et cetera.

In fact, all Grade Seven children in our school use this book.

This year, my son brought home the second book, *Focus*. Perhaps it is unfortunate that it was so soon after the second high school shooting incident. Perhaps I was sensitized and my reaction heightened, but I was overwhelmingly depressed by what I saw and read. In the following weeks, I would find my mind sadly returning to one aspect or another of the stories in the book. Again I found the violence, the disrespect for life, and man's inhumanity to man. I wondered about the effect it might have on a child with emotional problems – and there must be many of these; in fact, I wondered about the effect of six such books

in six successive years on any boy at this very impressionable age. And the lessons in grammar and sentence structure (the message) – can they survive the media? Or does the media become the message? Even at the best of times, who can separate the two – media and message?

Please consider these contents:

In the first section are six stories, four of which I consider violent. The opener is titled *The Long Cold Night* – a story of terror and murder on an icebound whaler: all members of the crew are murdered till only the murderer and the cabin boy remain. It is interesting to read that the author wrote for pulp and popular magazines.

**Woman Without Fear** is a true story about a woman snake handler who specializes in the most dreadful reptiles: cobras, pythons, crocodiles, et cetera and who ultimately is bitten and dies.

**Wally the Watchful Eye** is a humorous murder mystery in which a youthful detective solves the mystery of the murder of his boss's wife (by his boss). He says: "He did old Martha in with a few whiffs of gas before he went to Boston . . ."

**The Kitten** is a story about a young boy who finds a stray cat which annoys the boy's father and he thoughtlessly shouts, "Kill the damn thing". Out of spite, the boy proceeds to do just that: "I found a piece of rope, made a noose, slipped it about the kitten's neck, pulled it over a nail, then jerked the animal clear off the ground. It gasped, slobbered, spun, doubled, clawed the air frantically, finally its mouth gaped and its pink-white tongue shot out stiffly."

The chapter entitled *Courage* is introduced: "Is it looking danger in the face and not running away? Is it wanting to live but being willing to die? Is it living with terror, hour after hour? Is it killing? Or maybe not killing. . . et cetera."

Here is a story titled *One of the Brave*, a story of Indian fighting, shooting and hand to hand combat, graphically described.

**The Tigers and the Sharks** – also a magazine story – about an aircrew of five which dumps in the Pacific. One is killed in the crash and the others struggle for survival against the sea and

sharks. Two more deaths are described before the rescue – just in time to save another from the jaws of a shark.

**Spoil the Child**, another story about the settling of the American West with Indian raids on a family group in a covered wagon. They are short of water; the father is killed by the Indians and the boy kills an Indian.

**Rescue** – “One man buried alive for two weeks and the whole nation waiting for the news” – a television play based on an actual event of a man’s death protracted over two weeks.

**Vampires!** is the second “true” story by the author who wrote about the woman who handled snakes. The climax of the story is when the author goes to sleep in the same room as the vampire so his wife can observe an actual feeding, with the author as victim.

**Antaeus** is a very disturbing story about a group of boys from a depressed city area who enterprisingly carry soil to a factory rooftop and tenderly nurture a plot of grass. Just as the shoots appear they are discovered by the factory owner and ordered away. They go on a rampage in defiance and destroy their work.

**Brightside Crossing** – science fiction – crossing the side of the planet Mercury which always faces the sun. The terrifying heat and terrain claim all but one explorer.

**The Soul of Caliban** – a fiercely jealous one-man dog is forced to share his master when the man marries and then has a child. When the baby is missing and the dog has blood around his mouth he is shot – wrongly, it turns out.

**One Alaska Night** – a spell of terror is cast when a woman lost in the woods in the evening finds a cabin, on the grounds of which she finds remains of skeletons.

The chapter called *Turning Point* is introduced: “What should you do . . . when you’ve done something terribly wrong? . . . when you know you’re going to die? . . . when you are faced with a dangerous challenge . . .”.

**Bloodstain** – a 14 year-old boy secretly takes the

gun from home and, while in the woods, accidentally shoots the father of his best friend. He resolves never to tell anyone.

**The Gloucester Gladiator** – two soldiers are about to be executed when they are offered a last chance – fight the “strongest man in Korea”.

**Desertion** – another science fiction story about exploring the uninhabitable planet of Jupiter. One by one, men are sent on the mission and never return. Finally the commander himself goes.

What a sorry cross-section of life! Most stories are told in a very convincing manner.

In all honesty, my son likes these books. He also likes to watch *Cannon*, *Policy Story*, *Starsky and Hutch*, et cetera. To some degree, these programs are *de rigueur* to be “with it”, as far as kids are concerned, just as Coke and chips are in the area of nutrition. But we cannot afford to let our children grow up on diets like that – neither in food nor philosophy – they lead to malnutrition of body and mind. Our departments of education must not abdicate their responsibility in teaching social, as well as academic, lessons.

I hope that the work of your Commission will alert many more people as to the effects of violence.

*Mrs. Mary Miller*

**Simmons Joannis**  
**Anne-Lynn Kuchera**  
**Kapuskasing**

The purpose of this brief is to point out to you and to, hopefully, many others who will read these proceedings how we as parents and especially as parents in a semi-isolated community feel about the effects of television violence on our children.

There is no doubt that television is here to stay and no doubt that violence sells television programs to the advertisers. The normal adult mind has the power of discerning the "good guy" from the "bad guys" and the violent act from the harmonious one. However the mind of the child of two to twelve years of age is a non-discriminating one.

Every child will react differently to the same violent situation. Left unattended a four year old may quietly absorb the noise and brutality of a crime show and sleep well. Yet my four year old daughter had nightmares after viewing *Frosty the Snowman* melt. All children cannot help but be influenced by what they see there. Some may just watch and get the idea that the good guy always wins and the others may get so involved personally with the main character that he or she may not be able to differentiate between the fiction and the reality.

Part of the advantage of living here in Northern Ontario is that television is so limited that we can always predict what will be showing. However, the only drawback to this is that there is a dearth of sponsors for quality shows and consequently we are bombarded with second- and third-rate re-runs in prime viewing time. Not only that, but the commercials for these dramas are flashed on the screen at any spare time from noon on and it is unrealistic to expect anyone to monitor the afternoon game shows. Not only do I not want my children watching the original *FBI Story* but also am I against them seeing the most wicked episode from it in short, noisy flashes throughout the afternoon.

Television programming has evolved from being primarily recreational to include the educational aspect more and more. It can be used as a healthy and helpful organ of knowledge if used properly. Combined with outdoor play, reading,

sports and hobbies television viewing can help produce well-rounded individuals. There are excellent shows for every age group. I would never hesitate to let my children watch the superb Canadian production *Mr. Dress-Up* others as *Romper Room*, *Sesame Street* and as they grow older I hope that programs of the calibre of *Wild Kingdom* and the *Wonderful World of Disney*, *Rainbow Country* are still available.

I feel strongly that we as parents have the ultimate weapon in the choice of television programs for our children. We can and must choose to either allow or disallow certain programs. Needless to say the television is far too often used as a cheap babysitter in many homes and though statistics don't prove that there is a definite connection between violence and the communications industry, violent values and aggressive behaviour are learned values begun in early childhood and a passive absorption of these things must affect a child negatively.

There have been objections raised to the violence in cartoons. One coyote in the *Road Runner* dies at least once a minute. Cookie Monster has atrocious eating habits and re-runs of old cowboy movies teach prejudice and a distorted view of history. However, concerned parents will be firm about what their children watch on television and will explain why certain acts viewed there are offensive. There are many ways parents can find out the quality of television programming. Recent interest in the subject has resulted in the publication of several books designed to help guide the parent in his choice of programs. As well, numerous articles in family magazines point out the pitfalls of too much and too poor viewing.

But, we are not all concerned parents. Children are too often left unattended to watch anything they please often to the exclusion of other more healthy activities. In the after-supper hours youngsters often see more crime perpetrated on the innocent that you or I would see in a whole month's viewing of the late news. Why? Because thoughtless station managers are filling in time and careless parents are looking for some quiet time.

It is our feeling that we have a duty to protect these children. Government money must be spent



informing these parents of the effects of television violence on their children. Short promotions showing first the cause and then the effects of violent situations on their children should be aired during adult viewing times. It has been done for smoking, taking drugs, wearing seatbelts and buying eggs. Now, how about doing it for the kids.

*Simmons Joannis*

*Anne-Lynn Kuchera*

## **Georges Vanier School Smooth Rock Falls**

I herewith wish to bring to your attention my objections to the ever-increasing amount of violence in our information media.

Although television seems to top the list being, by its very nature, the most obviously visible, I don't exclude the newspapers, the magazines and even the comics.

I appreciate that the media's function is to reflect the reality as it exists in our society. However, this reflection at times becomes all too descriptive and too forceful, to the point where it blinds our youth, especially by its flashing brilliance.

I am sick at heart to see the growing tendency to glorify violent acts, violent personalities, in short, violence itself. If all the violence shown there had no follow-up, it wouldn't be so bad.

Conversely, we further witness that many members of our society copy or attempt to copy the heroes created by our media. This phenomenon is especially noticeable in the sports world but it is not restricted to that field alone.

I deplore as well the fact that not only physical violence is glorified and put in the limelight, but also moral and intellectual violence.

Is it truly necessary to show scenes of rape, brutish behaviour, torture and cruelty, and all kinds of abuses, in order to be able to properly communicate the main idea of the action?

Some will say that the media are only giving society what it asks for. I say we can create these wants and that we are caught in a sort of vicious circle where our tastes for violence are increasing at the same rate as it floods our media.

Recently, I witnessed the reaction of an audience watching the film *Jaws*, just when the shark neared its final end and the bloody pieces of flesh were flying all around every which way. When a number of people began to applaud, I couldn't help comparing this to the scene described by George Orwell in his novel *1984*, where a crowd claps on viewing the dismembering of a human being.

There is only a thin line separating shark from man; it won't be long before the state of mind of a violence society bridges this gap. For this reason, I

implore your Commission to act forcibly, with wisdom and quickly.

*Richard Pulsifer*  
*Principal*

## **St. Stanislas School**

### **Harty**

I deplore the fact that our children should be exposed to all kinds of violence through television, films, newspaper, and other communications media.

I would like to draw your attention to only one of many points which especially strikes me – the advertising of films on television. These are films which will be shown in cinemas or on television in the ensuing days

With regard to viewing time, this type of advertising is shown on television at any time of the day or evening. It is seen by people of all ages, children, teenagers and adults.

What is the content of this type of advertising? It shows only a very short excerpt, but the most violent part of the film seems to be chosen. This violent scene is projected on the screen: a gun shot, the victim run over by a car, another torn apart by a motor propeller blade or any other kind of abnormal, stupid, violent situation. No cause-and-effect explanation is given for this violence – only the brutal action from this short film excerpt is shown. What effect does this have on the child's thinking? He has been shown the act of violence, but the cause and effect have been left to his imagination.

Our children are exposed to this kind of communication every day, a number of times a day, from the time they are old enough to watch television up until the day they choose to turn it off. Would it not be possible to change the time of these film advertisements and especially the contents?

*Georgette Bourgeois*

### **St. Jules School Moonbeam**

I am very concerned about one aspect of violence in television. There is an ever increasing number of spectators, especially adolescents, who have become keen followers of programs involving the Oriental martial arts.

I am well aware that the government has taken certain measures in this area to make illegal the possession of certain arms coming to us from the Orient.

However, I don't believe enough has been done, if we are to judge from the ever-increasing number of clubs which give courses in the art of self-defence. It would seem advisable that the government be more strict with regard to such programs as *Kung Fu*.

I am quite sure the above remarks have already been made before your Commission.

In conclusion, I only hope that the government will be able to implement stricter measures with regard to this unjustifiable violence on television.

*Yvon Cote  
Principal*

### **Ste. Jeanne d'Arc School Fauquier**

I learned only recently that a Commission has been organized to fight violence in the communications industry. I very much appreciate that this work is being done and I sincerely hope it will have a positive effect on our television programming, especially.

It is deplorable to see a small child who can barely walk and tries to imitate the cowboys and the thugs. As things stand now, one is hard-put to follow a really instructional program without some obscene pictures, acts or language being slipped in. Is this the way to train the youth of tomorrow?

I think it is high time we take some action in this field of communication. If we are to put some beauty, something healthy in the minds of our students, it is time we thought about giving them true value examples on which to model their lives.

Wishing you every success, I am

*Sister Fleurette Dufour, SCO  
Principal*

## **Immaculate Conception School Kapuskasung**

I take the liberty of drawing your attention to one of the most striking examples of violence in the communications media, especially on television.

Sports broadcasting offers a conglomeration of pictures geared to satisfy and stimulate the element of sadism, either latent or already awakened, in everyone; in fact, who among us does not get some pleasure, to a more or less intense degree, in seeing someone bleed to satisfy this need to hurt either physically or mentally? Close-ups of rough action and replays of scenes of violence exploit rough action and replays of scenes of violence exploit this false need: in hockey, one is given two or three replays of the fist fights and the bulldozer checking tactics; wrestling is nothing but a brutal and savage display; roller derbies give an imitation of some rather out-of-the-ordinary brutish behaviour.

These programs are scheduled in such a way that children can see them; many children have not yet gone to bed. In addition to being encouraged to be violent, the child sees that, in order to assert himself, to win acclaim, he must resort to violence.

There are also too many detective and police films. The child sees such and such an actor felled and then sees him play a part in another film the following day, or even the same day; the child knows that it's just for fun, a game.

The child is also made to witness actual events: war, insurrection, robbery, kidnapping; he sees people fall under a spray of bullets. Does he know that these people will never get up again?

This brings me to lodge a protest against war films, scenes of violence of all kinds and the films screened during the news at times when children are still up and about. Is it not possible to keep this for the late evening news? I feel that the adult also should be spared such sad news. Why are we not also reminded that there are still some happy events going on? It is time to disprove the dictum which has it that: A happy people is one without a history.

I hope your Commission will have enough clout to force the government to soften the mores of the

communications media and to bring some element of cheerfulness to the newscasters.

*Pauline Larabie  
Principal*



## Manitoulin Secondary School West Bay

So you'd like to know how I feel about violence - well, here's my version of it.

Well, there's really nothing wrong with it, really, but if a program is going to be on television they should put it on after 9:00 p.m. or during the afternoon, so they may not pick up the bad language or be frightened of it.

I really love to see violence on television because I think they are the most attractive movies on screen cause they have a lot of action too.

*Kim Abotossaway*

## The Canadian Broadcasting League Ottawa

1. The Canadian Broadcasting League recommends that, in the school curriculum, much greater emphasis should be placed on the social impact of media upon society, as well as more intensive study of the artistic and technical principles involved in planning, writing and production of programs presented on radio and television.

We spend many hours in the schools teaching children the qualities of prose, but we spend very little time teaching them about the qualities of the mass media, particularly film and television. Since education is the constitutional responsibility of the province, we strongly urge that the Ministry of Education consider increased grants for the training of teachers with these special skills, and for the study of media in schools so that, as in the case of print, children will have some appreciation of the intrinsic values of the electronic media and some critical awareness of how to use the shows they see.

2. That the Ontario Arts Council, through funds made available from Wintario, consider a substantial program of support for writers preparing material for use in radio and television.

Many talented people can and do write for television when the opportunity affords itself. Increased support for the purpose of preparation of scripts for this medium could lead to less dependence on the clichés of violence and social conventions as plot motivation.

3. We recommend that, with support from both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, a guide book should be planned and published to assist parents in their understanding of the nature of media and media's impact on the lives of themselves and their children.

Such a publication could provide direct guidance for the use of media in the home, encouraging parents to share the viewing experience with their children. It would be the basis for group study among adults, contribute to the de-mystification

process and be a first step in the education of the public who have, to date, had little or no opportunity to become media literate.

4. Networks should be encouraged to remove excessively violent programs from their schedules during the daytime and early evening viewing periods when children and families customarily watch television. Promotions for violent programs or programs designed for mature viewers should not be included within family programs. Consideration should be given to development of a voluntary code, standards or guidelines for news and public affairs content and for scheduling of programs.

5. We recommend that the Province of Ontario, through one or more of its ministers of health, education or colleges and universities, should continue to give support to the study of the effect of media on society.

Much of the research already undertaken by the Commission should be of great value. With rapid technological developments and changes in the responses of advertisers and producers to shifting social values, the media themselves are in constant evolution. For this reason, a continuing assessment of the impact of media on society is both useful and necessary. At the same time, a policy of support for continuing research would enable us to establish a body of data related to the Canadian experience, to understand better the long-term effects of media on our society.

6. A concluding observation should be to aim at the creation of an environment in which the public, the broadcasters, and advertisers all have an opportunity to share with one another their concerns for the use of mass media in the public interest.

In Canada, we are fortunate to have reasonably high standards for presentation of programs in the private and the public sector. We are all aware of the effect which our access to vast amounts of foreign programming has had on shaping our tastes and expectations. Perhaps the most positive response available to us is to increase investment in our own creative talent so that the experience of television may become more significant for Canadians.

*Kealy Brooker*  
*Executive Director*

**Education Committee  
Ontario Federation of Home and  
School Associations Inc.  
1976**

The Education Committee of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations welcomes the opportunity to submit its views to the Commission and is, in a general way, appreciative of the concern shown by the Government of Ontario over the question of violence in society. This brief concerns itself primarily with issues relating to young people and their exposure to violence in the media, but these remarks are prefaced by some more fundamental and general observations on the nature of the issues contained in the Commission's terms of reference. These observations are offered both to add weight to the specific views expressed by this Committee and also in the hope that they will be seen to have general relevance to the deliberations of the Commission.

The six page prospectus circulated by the Commission ("Who we are, why we're here . . .") implies that a variety of questions will be addressed, that certain facts are already known, and particularly that specific linkages can be proved or disproved between media output and individual behaviour.

With respect to "facts," the document refers to "... the increasing exhibition of violence in the communications industry." Our Committee questions the extent to which this increase is held to exist, what evidence is accepted both by those inside and outside the media and whether, if such an increase is universally agreed to exist, it can be properly described as an "exhibition." Our reasons for doubt are many, but we suspect that the newspapers, for example, would claim that any increase in their columns reflects no more than the rise in the rate of violent crime.

More fundamentally, your terms of reference imply that it may be possible to examine objectively the relationship between violence in the media and subsequent personal behaviour. (Viz: "to determine whether there is any connection between . . ."). At another point, you refer to the repeated attempts which have been made in many professional circles to research this issue scientific-

ally. It is our view that such a connection can never be made in the kind of concrete terms which your prospectus seems to demand. This is indeed one of the prevailing and unfortunate mythologies of our positivistic society, namely, that "proof" rather than opinion must always be sought on matters of social importance. No doubt, it is your duty to examine and call for all the available evidence of a social scientific nature which is premised on the hope of determining this connection. Maybe such evidence might conceivably reveal some statistically significant correlations, but in the final analysis, the recognition of this problem (violence in the media) and its solution are both matters of opinion.

With this said, our Committee makes no apology for offering its opinion without surveys, evidence or proof of its accuracy. We ask only that opinions are counted as such and not as "mere" opinions.

We believe that three actions should be taken by the provincial government in regulating the media in terms of its accessibility to young people. First, we would like to have a government agency which monitors violence in the media according to definitions and standards agreed to by both the media and representatives of the public – standards which do not change year by year, so that information can be circulated on a regular basis to schools, boards of education and groups such as ours. Only then will all of us be able to agree that "an increasing exhibition of violence in the communications industry" does or does not exist.

Second, we recommend that the communications industry itself consider the possibility of establishing voluntary guidelines which are more uniform with respect to violence presented to young people. The CBC, for example, claims to exercise "good taste" but we are by no means convinced that even their guidelines formally respect the delicate position of young people. Bluntly, they appear to be far more reticent about the display of sex and bad language to adults late at night than about overt sadism and violence to young people in the early evening.

Third, we believe that, despite the admirable ambition of your Commission to conduct a comprehensive study covering all branches of the

media, special recognition must be given to television during "family viewing hours," particularly in view of the added immediacy and realism which this medium has attained since the advent of colour. In our view, the present situation does not call for government censorship, since television stations are already obliged to apply for broadcast licence renewals to the CRTC, and we can see no reason why this agency should not "police" this aspect of broadcasting more thoroughly. There appears to be no necessity, in our view, for the broadcast of television programs illustrating rape, sadism, disfigurement or slow death during the early evening hours, nor is there any necessity to strive for further realism in the display of violence in general. The main argument advanced by those who would deny the ill effects of violence in the media centres around the ability of people to distinguish fictional fantasy from real life, and our concern is as much with the apparent determination of so many television directors to achieve as it is with the amount or frequency of violence per se.

May I add that our Canadian Home and School Parent-Teacher Federation has been concerned with the question of children's programming for many years: in 1963, the CHSPTF asked for research on children's programming; in 1966, for classification of programming; in 1973, less violence; in 1974, we recommended to our provincial federations a study of the documentary *A Question of Violence*. No doubt you are familiar with this documentary on the Senate Commission in the United States. It has been widely quoted and can, we believe, be considered relevant for Canadian audiences as well as American, since so much of our programming is imported from the U.S. and a very large proportion of viewers watch American channels in preference to Canadian.

The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. conducted a pilot study on the documentary and hundreds of parents signed petitions requesting the House of Commons Standing Committee on Radio, Communications and the Arts and The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, urging them to investigate the cause of excessive and gratuitous television violence transmitted by Canadian broadcasters, and, further, to undertake

appropriate steps to eliminate this violence and to replace it with pro-social material in the interests of our children and the quality of life in Canada.

This same report has also been studied by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers in the United States and it has adopted a very strongly worded resolution urging action on this question.

In 1975, the Canadian HSPTF requested that an advisory committee be formed of parents, educators and child psychologists to work with government agencies and the television industry to review programming in general and particularly during child viewing hours.

At the mid-term executive meeting of the CHSPTF, the provincial presidents issued a press release supporting the position taken by James A. McGrath, M.P. in his presentation to this Commission and his efforts in the House of Commons. There is no necessity for me to reiterate his statements. You will readily note the similarity in our opinions that a clear responsibility lies with the CRTC to regulate broadcasting in Canada and to impose guidelines and regulations respecting the portrayal of violence during the broadcast of a television program.

As has been expressed by others quoted by Mr. McGrath, the impact of the apparent acceptance by society of violence as a way of life is a matter which should concern us. The stress on realism, the explicit and detailed recital of acts of violence does not enhance the quality of life. I am not suggesting that, if we ignore these facts, the situation will disappear, but in this age of visual impact, the continued exposure to cruelty and abuse must surely help to develop a casual view toward it and lessen one's natural abhorrence.

We would hope that this Commission will be able to conclude from its hearings and deliberations that action is required and recommend to the Government of Ontario to take whatever measures are within its jurisdiction to ameliorate the situation and to press the Government of Canada to act through its own avenues to bring in the necessary regulations under The Broadcast Act.

We thank you again for this opportunity to express our concerns on behalf of our members.

*Ms Kristi Jarvis*



## Yvon O. Dicaire Hawkesbury.

Does the increasing exploitation of violence in movies, television, theatre, books, newspapers, periodicals, comics, records and other methods of communication adversely affect the behaviour of individuals and groups?

As early as conception, the child exerts a disrupting influence on its environment. Indeed, the parents and the family are required to make a psychic transition which will culminate in a physical transformation.

The parents are not the only ones required to undergo this metamorphosis. The fetus itself passes through thousands of changes, which are too many to enumerate here. Moreover, the object of this brief is not a discussion of development but of violence and its harmful influences.

It would be presumptuous on my part to simply give my own opinion, hoping that it would be taken as authoritative.

This is why I would like to refer to known authors in the field of psychology. Eventually I will add my own comments as an educator (parent and professor).

Whenever one wishes to study a subject, it is, without a doubt, important to get a hold of the central ideas of the problems.

What is violence? Is heredity the only factor responsible for moulding a personality?

And what should be said of the process of maturing?

The need to find answers for these questions appears to be essential if one wants truly to grasp the scope of violence in communications as contributory to violence in society.

What is violence?

Violence can be considered to be a constraint exerted on a person. But this constraint can be either direct or indirect, conscious or unconscious. When we see a child bearing the evident marks of corporal punishment, one can affirm that direct constraint was used by the parent, teacher et cetera.

But how difficult it is to look for the evident signs of indirect constraint! It is there, even though we may have our doubts, but to see all of its influence and its mechanisms, then the question

becomes more complicated. Let's simply cite a study done a few years ago on the subject of the influence of toy commercials on children. This study found a conclusive and direct relationship between the manner in which the toy was presented and the toy itself. It alters the child's thinking. To buy this toy signified complete happiness. But, not being able to distinguish, the child soon realized that the toy could not make him perpetually happy.

The constraint is even more serious because a child or an adolescent is unable to defend himself. We are then speaking of judgment and maturity. We will discuss this statement when we speak of the maturing process.

Is heredity alone responsible for a personality?

Has this question been resolved since the beginning of this century? Indeed, psychologists agree that, as Paul Osterrieth stated in his book *Psychologie de l'enfant* (Child Psychology), heredity and environment make up the totality of influences which form the personality of a human being.

Suffice it to say that heredity is responsible for a large number of factors, but the exact degree of importance has not been satisfactorily established because "the environment is responsible at least in part for psychological and moral characteristics."

These statements are also supported by a well-known authority, Doctor Thomas A. Harris. Indeed, the doctor states in his book *I'm O.K. You're O.K.*, and I quote:

There are sources of Parent<sup>1</sup> data other than the physical parents. A three-year-old who sits before a television set many hours a day is recording what he sees. The programs he watches are a "taught" concept of life. If he watches programs of violence, I believe he records violence in his parents. That's how it is, that is life!

This conclusion is certain, if his parents do not express opposition by switching the channel. If they enjoy violent programs, the youngster gets a double sanction – the set and the folks – and he assumes permission to be violent, provided he collects his own reasons to shoot up the place, just as the sheriff does; three nights of cattle rustlers, a stage holdup and a stranger foolin' with Miss Kelly can be easily matched in the life of the little person.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, one can assert without too much hesitation that television, because it makes up part

of the environment, influences children indirectly and unconsciously and often in a harmful manner.

On the other hand, one must understand that an adolescent is looking for his own identity. This statement may appear to be simple, but it implies a complete evolution. Indeed, "an adolescent no longer attempts like a child to subjugate others, but to make himself clear to others in order to discover who he is."<sup>3</sup>

This is why, as the author says later on:

The construction of self-image corresponds to the construction of a framework for the interpretation of both the natural and the social world, and thus the development of self-consciousness coincides with an increased and clearer perception of reality.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the child, the adolescent, who perceives violence as good and accepted (parents watch it without interrupting it, and television disseminates it et cetera) integrates it into his person and can thus have recourse to it when necessary and legitimate, according to his framework.

Who is to blame? What should be done? To blame someone or a particular group is very difficult. We believe that society itself is partially responsible. We will say as Arthur Miller after the murder of Robert Kennedy:

There is violence because we have daily honoured violence. Any half-educated man in a good suit can make his fortune by concocting a television show whose brutality is photographed in sufficiently monstrous detail. Who produces these shows, who pays to sponsor them, who is honoured for acting in them? Are these people delinquent psychopaths slinking along tenement streets? No, they are the pillars of society, our honoured men, our exemplars of success and social attainment. . .<sup>5</sup>

It is for these reasons that I demand that the Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry ban programs in which one treats, glorifies violence.

*Yvon O. Dicaire*

3. D. Origlia et H. Ouillon *L'adolescent*, les éditions sociales francaises, 1968 p. 62, 63.
4. Ibid., p. 215.
5. Thomas A. Harris, *I'm O.K. You're O.K.* p. 298

## Endnotes

1. The Parent is a huge collection of recordings in the brain – unquestioned or imposed external events perceived by a person in his early years, a period which we have designated weighty as the first five years of life.
2. Paul Osterrieth, *Psychologie de l'enfant*, PVF 1967 p. 19 et suivante pp. 252.

## Ontario Psychological Association

### *Text prepared by members of the Task Force on Violence in the Communication Media*

#### Introduction

The Ontario Psychological Association is the voluntary association whose responsibilities include the presentation of the knowledge of the science of psychology, and the positions of the profession of psychology in Ontario, before the public. The OPA Charter states as its purpose: "To advance the cause of psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting human welfare; to promote psychological research and its practical applications; to encourage cooperation between members of the psychological profession and others working in related fields. . .". Consequently, as soon as The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry was commissioned, the Ontario Psychological Association submitted competent psychologist nominees to serve with the Commission, and struck a Task Force (see Appendix A) to prepare and to submit a brief to the Commission.

Psychology is the science of behaviour. As such, it contains within its subject matter the study of human behaviour, and the effects of environmental events on that behaviour. Clearly, then, the Commission's inquiry falls within the domain of psychology. If valid statements are to be made within the area of the Commission's inquiry, those statements will either contribute to or derive from the science called psychology, in that research work in the field of inquiry has been undertaken for the most part by psychologists, and future research work will be employed by psychologists to improve the quality of life in the community.

#### Definitions

The *definition of violence* is problematic. Obviously, that use of the term which is associated with physical harm or injury to an individual or

his property is of most importance to the Commission's inquiry. It is equally obvious that in most instances violence does not emerge full-blown without some antecedent or precursor behaviours of a lesser intensity. This means that, for the purposes of a meaningful inquiry, violence needs to be quantified in some way. It will be found, as a host of psychological studies have shown, that in any given individual, if violence is eventually to appear, the degree or intensity of aggressiveness will increase over time in attitude, fantasy or behaviour.

A great number of different types of *dependent* observations or measures of aggressiveness have been used in studies of this phenomenon. These different measures apparently represent different aspects of aggressiveness, since it has been shown Geen, et al (1968); Liebowitz (1968) that most of the measures of aggressiveness which have been used are statistically independent, or not significantly related, to one another. However, it has also been shown – Berkowitz (1965a, 1965b); Walters and Brown (1963); Williams, et al (1967) that the various measures of aggression that have been used in research into the phenomenon are affected in essentially the same ways by different experimental treatments. These observations may be interpreted to mean that the various measures of aggressiveness which have been used to demonstrate the effects of media exposure on later aggressive behaviour, are each tapping different aspects of the general concept of aggressiveness.

Aggression or violence, as an *independent* or *depicted* variable, has been measured in media contents. The usual method used for evaluating the aggressive/violent content in media presentations involves rating of presentations by observers for the amount of aggressive content. This method has been found to yield good internal consistency and good reliability of measures – Gerbner (1972a, 1973); Greenberg and Gordon (1972), permitting depicted content to be both quantified for the amount of violence, and separated into violent and non-violent presentations. Using these measures, considerable information has been developed concerning the contents of the media in the United States, and a limited amount of infor-

mation about the contents of the media in Ontario.

### Problems

There are at least three general *questions* which need to be evaluated for purposes of the present inquiry.

1. *Does media presented violence significantly increase the probability of disruptive, destructive or aggressive behaviour or attitudes in individuals, and subsequently in society as a whole?*
2. *What are the conditions under which aggressive effects are obtained?*
3. *What are the means by which potentially or actually harmful influences of the media on society can reliably be reduced?*

Valid *answers* the above questions can only be derived from data obtained from experimental research. However, the application of the methods of science to behavioural data is an extremely specialized task, and only a very cursory analysis of the problem can be considered to be within the necessary limitations of this brief. It seems clear that the enormity of the task of evaluating properly even the first of the questions posed above is such that, as Liebert has stated (Liebert, et al 1973), the only definitive study of the real effects of televised violence on society would involve a comparison of violence manifested in two western nations which, in all other respects, were equal, but in which one had received no exposure to violence in its media, and the other had received the kind of exposure to violence to which North American consumers are exposed. It is difficult to find a basis for generalizing meaningfully from results obtained in laboratory environments to real life situations. Outside the laboratory, correlational methods must often be employed, and with these methods it is difficult to control for the effects of other variables. Fortunately, in the area of the present inquiry, a large number of research studies have been undertaken which have employed different kinds of measurements, research methods, and conditions, and which have been variously replicated with different subject groups. These many different

studies, with but a few exceptions, all seem to lead to the same general conclusions, which may therefore be considered to be valid. The very consistency of the findings implies that their conclusions may probably be extrapolated to everyday life with relatively little risk of error.

### Society and the Media

*Violent behaviour* has been increasing fairly steadily throughout the world for some years. This increase is particularly apparent in the developed western world, and particularly in the 20 years during which television has been developing and mass communications media have been reaching almost everyone. Murder rates in the United States have doubled in twenty years to the point that more than one person in 200 may be murdered – Lunde (1975). Statistics Canada has reported that murder rates in this country climbed per 100,000 population from 1.6 in 1969 to 2.4 in 1974. These changes reflect increases in only one type of violence, occurring in spite of increasing commitments by society to the costs of law enforcement, the courts and corrections. However, a great deal is known about the causes of violence and the conditions under which aggression and violence occur. It is no longer meaningful to account for the occurrence of violence with the ancient belief that it is in the nature of mankind to be violent (Eisenberg, 1972). It is now fairly clear that, in addition to the other recognized causes, one of the major causes of violence, in spite of the many arguments that have been stated by representatives of the media (see Appendix B), is to be found in the depiction of violence in the communications media (Baker and Ball, 1969; Bandura, 1965b; Bandura and Walters, 1963; Berkowitz, 1962, 1968; Goranson, 1970; Klapper, 1963; Leifer, et al, 1974; Liebert, et al, 1973; Maccoby, 1964; Murray, 1973).

The *experience of violence* on the part of the individual member of society in everyday life, however, is rather limited. The vast majority of daily living includes socialized activities, cooperative living, family fun, work and play. While it seems obvious that the media do not reflect daily life as it really is, there are some studies of television contents which are illuminating. Only



about 20 per cent of all characters on television are women (Gerbner, 1972a; Sternglanz and Serbin, 1974); minority group characters are usually well-mannered and stereotyped (Menelson and Young, 1972; Ormiston and Williams, 1973); and murder is most likely to occur on television between strangers or near strangers (Gerbner, 1972a). All of these characteristics of television stand in sharp contrast to conditions in the real world.

In spite of the limited real life experience of violence, *violence depicted in the media* is a daily experience of most Ontario residents. A large part of the daily media fare available to the vast majority of Ontario residents originates in the United States. The media contents from the United States have been studied in some detail (Clark and Blankenburg, 1972; Gerbner, 1972a, 1972b; Greenberg, 1969; Greenberg and Gordon, 1972), and have been shown to contain a preponderance of violent content. The percentage of violent content in television in the United States rose fairly steadily, from 17 per cent in the mid 1950s to about 75 per cent to 80 per cent by 1969, where it has remained (Liebert, 1974). Although much of the media contents originating in Canada may contain a lower incidence of violence than those originating in the United States, even Canadian contents contain a higher proportion of violence than is found in the normal daily lives of individuals. This is particularly true if one includes news reports, sports, and movies in the analysis.

It seems clear that in the eyes of many media people a major function or purpose of the media is for *entertainment*. There seems little reason to doubt that the pursuit of entertainment is an important part of Canadian life. Media people also seem to assume that violence is entertaining, perhaps more so than other types of contents. That media people must think that violence is particularly entertaining seems clear from the high proportion of violence in the media; – that their assumption may seem justified, may be concluded from the apparent high consumer interest in and consumption of violent contents. However, there is no reason why violence should be more inherently entertaining or newsworthy than pro-social events. Perhaps the apparent consumer demand

for violence as entertainment is the result of learning. It is possible that the apparent increase in consumer demand for violence may merely be a result of the consumer learning to accept and expect violent contents from repeated exposure to mass produced media containing violence.

In addition to their entertainment function *the media are our main educators*. Parents and teachers often have too little time to help their children learn; peers often present erroneous information. Television becomes the main “window on the world” of the very young, and a major source of learning at a time in life when the child is particularly susceptible to learning and unable to critically evaluate faulty information. Radio, books and magazines add to the educational materials for children as they grow up, while they are still relatively limited in their critical faculties. Newspapers are mainly educational media for adults. They present their information as factual, which inhibits the critical faculties of the reader. The media share in their effect of presenting to consumers a distorted picture of the world. Often, consumers appear to be educated to perceive that their real environment is one populated largely by aggressive and violent people, who behave in stereotyped ways. The latter are frequently pictures as heroes, and are generously and warmly rewarded following their violent conduct. In effect, by communicating this image of the world, the media may often suggest that violence is a common, acceptable, and perhaps even commendable act and that it may be a means by which desired ends can be achieved.

### **Violence and the Media**

*The effects of media depicted violence on the evocation of violent behaviour* are discussed in greater detail in Appendix C. It has been clearly demonstrated that violence presented in the media increases aggressive, and probably later violent, behaviour of consumers. This is not to state that all individuals are affected by all violent contents, but it is to state that many individuals, and not just those who are in some way unusual, are affected significantly by many different types of violent contents. This effect is found virtually always in more aggressive people or in angered or

aroused people (Berkowitz, 1965a; Berkowitz and Geen, 1967; Geen and Stonner, 1974; Hartmann, 1969; Hoyt, 1970; Liebert and Baron, 1972; Stein and Friedrich, 1972; Wolf and Baron, 1971), and usually in non-angered people (Bandura, et al, 1963b; Walters, et al, 1963). This effect is enhanced if the aggressive behaviour depicted seems to be rewarded (Bandura, et al, 1961, 1963a, 1963c), if the aggressive conduct appears to be justified (Berkowitz, 1965b; Hoyt, 1967, 1970), and if the cues associated with the media message are present in the subsequent situation (Bandura, 1969; Berkowitz, 1964; Berkowitz and Geen, 1966, 1967; Geen and Berkowitz, 1966). The effect is also enhanced if the words associated with what is seen mediate the transfer from the content depicted to later imitative behaviour (Bandura, et al, 1967; Coates and Hartup, 1969), and if the person who models the actions is presented or seen as having social status relative to the consumer (Britt, 1971; Hammer, 1971; Harvey and Rutherford, 1960; Lefkowitz, et al, 1955; Schuh, 1971). Moreover, what is learned can often be retained over quite long intervals (Eron, et al, 1972; Hicks, 1965; Lefkowitz, et al, 1972). There are several reviews of the literature on the effects of media violence on the evocation of violent behaviour (Baker and Ball, 1969; Bandura, 1965b; Bandura and Walters, 1963; Berkowitz, 1962, 1968; Goranson, 1970; Klapper, 1963; Leifer, et al, 1974; Liebert, 1974; Liebert, et al, 1973; Maccoby, 1964; Murray, 1973).

Research work on the effects of media violence in evoking violent behaviour has taken many forms, and it is far beyond the scope of this Brief to detail the material (see Appendix C). However, over 50 studies have been conducted in order to examine the problem in most conceivable ways. Laboratory studies using groups of subjects exposed to different types of contents have been employed to show the short-term effects of media exposure on the consumer's behaviour.

Field studies have been employed to correlate the amount of violence viewed with later aggressive behaviour. There are a few long-term studies of the effects of depicted violence on real life aggressiveness. There are obvious criticisms of each type of study which has been mounted, and each study has its own limitations. None of the

studies is conclusive in itself. However, the consensus among the several different types of studies, and the consistency with which effects are shown in the various experiments, all point strongly toward the conclusion that exposure to some variants of media violence increases the probability of later development of aggressive behaviour and anti-social attitudes.

The *means by which violence evokes later aggressive behaviour* are reasonably well known. Again, a detailed account of these means and how they operate is beyond the scope of this brief. An attempt will be made to discuss some of them in Appendix D. In general, the main means by which violence is learned from exposure to media violence appears to be through modelling or imitation. Humans appear to imitate a good deal of what they are exposed to in the conduct of others, especially if those to be imitated are seen as having status, and are seen as being rewarded for their behaviour. Some of the learning which is accomplished by exposure to the media may also be learned by a more direct reward process, for example, by the individual receiving direct reward through media exposure for his conduct or for the more extreme behaviours of members of his group. Certainly, many demonstrations involving violence have been mounted expressly to achieve media exposure. Frustration and fear are recognized as important sources of aggressive behaviour, and both are undoubtedly generated by exposure to the media. Perhaps the most obvious examples would be frustration arising from exposure to the lives of many others having higher socio-economic expectations and life styles than the consumer, or fear of the expected violent behaviour of others generating a defensive and possibly aggressive posture on the part of the consumer. Reduction in respect for the law, for example, through depicted brutality or disrespectful conduct on the part of police, may contribute to an increase in aggressive or anti-social conduct on the part of the consumer.

### **Media and Prosocial Behaviour**

In addition to the very considerable evidence of the aggressive and anti-social effects which can be produced by exposure to media violence, there is

also a growing literature demonstrating the considerable effects that the media can have in *evoking pro-social behaviour* in consumers. Appropriate types of media contents have been shown to be capable of evoking persistence and cooperation (Stein and Friedrich, 1972), altruism (Midlarsky, et al, 1973; Morris, et al, 1973; Yarrow, et al, 1973), sharing (Bryan, 1970; Bryan and London, 1970; Bryan and Walbeck, 1970; Krebs, 1970), moral judgement (Keasey, 1973; Prentice, 1972; Turiel and Rothman, 1972), resistance to temptation (Rosenkoetter, 1973; Walters, et al, 1963; Wolf, 1973; Wolf and Cheyne, 1972), and willingness to help others (Rosenhan and White, 1967). Fears can be unlearned by exposure to appropriate media contents (Bandura and Menlove, 1967; Bandura, et al, 1967; Cline, et al, 1973; Stein, 1972), and the investigation of pro-social possibilities has only begun. Moreover, even when destructive contents are presented in the media, there is evidence that their effects on consumer behaviour can be minimized if the media contents are presented in ways which show the painful consequences of violence, do not reward or imply status to the aggressor, and do not present successful resolutions for violence depicted. In addition, parental reactions to contents also modify their effects (Ball and Bogatz, 1970; Grusec, 1973; Hicks, 1968).

### Recommendations

1. *Regulations* should state clearly the relative amounts of violence and anti-social content which may be presented in any programme, including the news. The amount of representation of violent or antisocial content in any programme should be restricted, and related to the amount of violence or antisocial experience encountered by the average person during a time period equivalent to that represented in the story. Such a restriction would result in a much lower incidence of violence in the media than at present, but it would probably still result in a gradual increase in violence in society because the amount of violence presented would probably still exceed the amount of violence typically encountered in everyday life by the average citizen.

- (a) It would be important to monitor the effectiveness of any regulations which were introduced for the purpose of reducing violence in the media. Although media effects on human behaviour have been known for some years, with information on the subject having started to become available in the early 1960s, and although the information has been available from authoritative sources since 1972, and although media industry leaders have promised control and reduction in the amounts of violence on television, the rates of violence on television have not been reduced appreciably, and instead have remained at about 75 per cent in program contents since 1969 (Liebert, 1974). This means that the communications industry has not been particularly reliable in self-monitoring and self-control functions, in spite of the avowed intentions of media spokesmen. If it is found that self regulation of the communications industry is ineffective, then other control measures should probably be considered. Since regulation of the industry as a whole is not a provincial matter, regulation of the individual contributor to industry contents may have to be considered at some time, perhaps in a manner equivalent to that in which other groups which have important effects on human behaviour and living, such as psychologists and physicians, are regulated in the service of public protection.
- (b) In the event that any control or regulating procedures are introduced, it would be important to insure that agencies involved in such regulation be free from any vested interests. Groups regulating media contents should be comprised wholly of consumers. Advertisers should be excluded from participation in regulatory bodies to prevent economic control of media contents. In like fashion, political censorship must be avoided by insuring that all appointments to regulatory bodies are non-political. One need not fear limitations acting on a free press if all limitations and regulations are under the sole control of consumers.
- (c) It may even be appropriate to consider regulating the programming of media



contents prior to making the program available for sponsorship to advertisers. It has frequently been remarked that a large part of the process of selection of media contents is under the control of advertisers. There appears to be quite strong economic control over media contents, with the availability of sponsorship for particular contents determining in large part whether the contents are presented to consumers. This would tend to distort any regulating efforts for media contents. It might be appropriate, then, to insure that advertisers and sponsors are not permitted to select contents to sponsor or support until *after* the contents have already been selected and programmed for presentation.

2. *Violence* presented in the media should contain as many as possible of the features of a presentation which are known to reduce imitative effects on consumer behaviour. When violence is presented it should contain all the features of real life violence, including its consequences for the victim, appropriate characteristics of perpetrators and victims, low status characteristics for perpetrators, and few or no rewards implied for the violent people represented. Moreover, rewards should be reserved in media stories for those who successfully cope in the face of any violence presented, and for those who are represented as pursuing positive social goals in positive social ways.
3. *Information* should be continuously provided for all personnel involved in production and in control of the media. Such information should be current, clear and definite about the effects of media presentations on human behaviour. Such information should be made available, and exposure to the information made mandatory, for all people working creatively in the media, and for all members of any regulatory bodies involved in control of the media. These people should be trained to recognize story features which limit the risk of imitation of anti-social behaviours presented.
4. *Research evaluation* should be undertaken of at least a fairly large sample of media contents. Such research evaluation should be undertaken by

independent (non-governmental) but publicly funded agencies. Among the purposes of this research should be the determination in advance of public presentation of any potentially harmful effects of proposed media contents. This evaluation or pre-testing of samples of media contents should be considered to be analogous to the pre-testing of potentially hazardous chemicals before they are permitted to be released to the consumer market. Methods for pre-testing media contents are available. As indicated in the brief, these methods include ratings of the contents of media presentations for their relative violence, and experimental testing of varying media contents to determine their effects on behaviour. The former task is a relatively simple and inexpensive one, the latter task is more complex and costly, but would contribute directly to information on the effects of media by replicating former studies.

5. *Monetary rewards* or other explicit forms of recognition should be offered for high quality productions which do not resort to violence for their impact.
6. *Entertainment* media should be encouraged repeatedly to seek and to present positive social contents. Such encouragement is currently given mainly to educational media. Programs stressing positive social values should represent the majority of media fare for particularly vulnerable groups of consumers such as children and residents of correctional institutions.
7. *Human stress*, and its psychological counterpart in fear and anxiety, are contributors to violence and aggression. There is some preliminary evidence that properly constructed media contents can reduce anxiety and stress. Research should be stimulated to evaluate the capacity of media contents to reduce stress and anxiety, and thereby potentially to make a contribution to the reduction of violent and aggressive behaviour in society arising from this source. Most of the foregoing recommendations have been concerned with control efforts in relation to the media. The present recommendation represents a positive contribution that the Commission might make to possible future positive uses of the media through provincial government commitment to research in



this area. Consequently, this Association would like to draw particular attention to this recommendation.

8. *Public information* about the effects of the media on human behaviour, experience, and attitudes should be made available to the consumer through publicly funded presentations. This information should include recommendations about appropriate consumer use habits, and means available to the consumer to protect himself from undesirable effects of media contents on his behaviour.

## Appendix A

### *The Ontario Psychological Association and its Task Force*

The Ontario Psychological Association is the voluntary provincial association of psychologists. Its membership is composed primarily of psychologists, although it also has student members and members who are psychological assistants. It is a corporate body whose Executive Committee and Directors are elected by the membership. The Ontario Psychological Association speaks on behalf of the profession of psychology, which includes approximately 1,000 psychologists licensed in the Province of Ontario.

The present executive officers of The Ontario Psychological Association are:

Dr. David Randall, President

Dr. Tasso Christie, President-Elect

Dr. Timothy Hogan, Past-President

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Following the commissioning of The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry, The Ontario Psychological Association's Board of Directors struck a Task Force to prepare and to submit a brief to the Royal Commission. The Board of Directors appointed one of its members to serve as the Chairman of the Task Force, and to assemble an appropriate group of psychologists to aid him in the task.

Douglas A. Quirk was appointed Task Force Chairman. He is currently employed as Clinical Supervisor of the Assessment Unit of the Ontario Correctional Institute in Brampton. He has been employed as a psychologist with the Toronto Board of Education, the East York-Leaside Child Guidance Centre, Queen Street Mental Health Centre, and the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry. Most recently he has been in full-time private practice in Toronto. The rationale of his appointment to this Task Force was that he was, at the time of his appointment, unfamiliar with the literature on the effects of media contents on human behaviour, and could therefore be expected to approach the task assigned without pre-existing bias or a selective focus on the available literature.

Noel Derrick was invited to serve as a member of the Task Force. He is a psychologist employed at the L.S. Penrose Centre in Kingston. Dr. Derrick is a cautious research worker who is known for his interest in information relevant to anti-social behaviour. He has had a long term interest in the research work in the present area of inquiry.

Michael Waye is at present undertaking his doctoral studies at the Department of Educational Psychology of the University of Calgary. At the time when the Task Force was struck he was employed in psychological work in northern Ontario. Most of his research work, including his degree dissertations, has been concerned with the issues affecting the present inquiry. He has performed some analyses of the television contents in Ontario, and of the effects of certain types of contents upon behaviour.

Other psychologists, such as Drs. Goranson and Doob were unable to assist greatly in the present brief since they were to be involved in other presentations affecting the Royal Commission's inquiry. Dr. Joan Grusec contributed help, advice, and encouragement.

The brief which is herewith submitted to the Royal Commission has been considered and approved by the O.P.A. Communications Committee, and then by the Board of Directors of The Ontario Psychological Association.

The Board of Directors of The Ontario Psychological Association now respectfully submits this brief to the Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry on behalf of the membership of The Ontario Psychological Association.

## Appendix B

### *Some Apparent Media Positions Regarding the Effects of Media Violence on Humans*

Although some media representatives and spokesmen appear to be aware of some of the hazards involved in media presentations of violence, the vast majority of media spokesmen who have come to public attention on the issue appear to be unaware of the evidence on the subject, and even to pooh-pooh the notion that any undesirable effects derive from media violence. Some spokesmen have even gone so far as to affirm that, if there are any undesirable effects of media-presented violence, those effects are found only in persons who would have been just as violent anyway, or even only in persons having unbalanced minds or basic psychological disturbances. Some media people have implied that those scientists who espouse the view that media violence causes violence in society are both in a minority, and are probably fad followers.

At the same time, media people are among the first to believe that the communications media are a powerful source of influence on people, and to believe in the idea that they serve as models for people's lives and as major sources of information and education, which, one would assume, they would also believe profoundly affect the lives and behaviours of people. Indeed, although media folk are perhaps most enamoured of the media as art forms, their own story contents tend frequently to depict media presentations as having considerable effects upon the lives of people exposed to those presentations, suggesting, perhaps, that many media personnel do not really believe that media contents have little direct effect on consumers.

Perhaps the problem of media recognition of its own effects on human behaviour can best be illustrated in references to organized media presentations of media effects on behaviour. One such probably influential presentation was made in *TV Guide*, June 14-20, 1975. In this issue the topic of violence was made into a major presentation under the title, *Violence! on TV - Does it Affect Our Society?* The presentation, by means of its structure, gave the impression of being a balanced and objective presentation. It contained two

sections, one presenting the affirmative and one presenting the negative arguments, following a general introduction featuring Senate and House representatives and network presidents. The apparent objectivity and balance of the discussion in presenting both the affirmative and negative points of view communicated to the incautious reader the idea that the evidence was not yet in, and that there really might still be some basis for doubt. And a kind of equivalence was implied between polemic and personal opinions of media personnel on the one hand, and conclusions from a multitude of careful research studies stated by scientists having no vested interests in the conclusions, on the other hand.

The apparent inaccessibility of many media attitudes to the available evidence seems to demand some attention from the Royal Commission. It must surely be a source of astonishment to the onlooker to notice that (i) those people who seem to be most committed to the importance of information and fact to everyday living, seem resistive to change in their own attitudes from existing and unambiguous information, and (ii) those people who seem most committed to the view that the media have profound effects on the everyday lives of humans, seem to resist the idea that profound effects may be obtained on human behaviour from the presentation of one type of content, namely violence. Reference here is, of course, to those people who have committed their lives to work in the media.

The most obvious explanation for the above paradoxes would be that those media personnel's attitudes at issue have been strongly affected by the rewards of their work in income and social recognition. But, even if these people's attitudes have been shaped in a setting in which the presentations of violence provides the preponderant content, this explanation would not necessarily account for the rigidity and frequency of the attitude in question, since some reinforcement would also have been available for a contrary attitude derived from frequent presentation of prosocial contents. Perhaps other explanations need to be found.

Perhaps what has been reinforced among media personnel in the development of vested interests in the presentation of violent contents, has been a

loyalty or commitment to what media folk have done in the past in their presentations. Perhaps, that is, some media folk would consider it disloyal to their colleagues to adopt an attitude suggesting that violent media contents might have undesirable effects on society. Or perhaps media people recognize the ease and simplicity of the task of presenting violence in the media for themselves and for their colleagues. And yet media folk are, if anything, noted for their self-interests rather than their need for loyalty to one another, and they are noted more for their industry than for their laziness. Consequently, an explanation for the above paradoxes should surely be found elsewhere.

It seems most likely that the reasons underlying the perpetuation of the above noted paradoxes of media attitudes are two. First, it seems probable that media personnel have come to believe that the consumer wants and needs violence in media contents, and that violent contents alone will maintain a consumer interest in the media to permit other products, including pro-social contents and commercial products, to be sold – thus benefitting the industry and the public. The essence of this belief has been variously stated and illustrated, and it involves the fear that consumers would not attend to non-violent media contents. Second, it seems probable that media personnel have not yet received in clear and unambiguous form the information that media violence creates violent effects in society. Perhaps media personnel tend to evaluate information partly on the basis of the prestige of the person providing the information; and perhaps media personnel tend to assign equivalent prestige in terms of the validity of their information to their own colleagues in the media as to scientists and expert professionals in other fields. If these are indeed the reasons why media personnel have resisted modification of their attitudes in the face of extensive evidence of the effects of media violence on later violence in society, then these reasons seem to require some attention by the Royal Commission. After all, the media will tend to be the main means by which the public will come to know about the findings and conclusions of the Royal Commission.

### *Consumer Need for Media Violence*

In her negative article in the *TV Guide* issue referred to earlier, Edith Efron champions the value of contemporary television programming, both by negating research with emotionalized arguments richly supported by the use of the *argumentum ad hominum*, and by reference to the sales record of television programs presenting violence which she characterizes as presenting “the continuing heroes”. Efron states: “It is precisely because the heroes are absolutely reliable emotional magnets that the networks schedule so many heroic series”. The argument seems to have two parts.

The first part of the argument seems to imply the old psychoanalytic view of *catharsis*. Indeed, one study (Feshbach and Singer, 1971) which has been quoted frequently, appears to provide a basis for the argument that viewing television violence serves as a kind of drain or catharsis by which pent up aggressive or violent feelings can be discharged by the viewer. The assumed consequence of viewing television violence, then, is that the viewer is less, rather than more, violent after viewing violence. Indeed, the Feshbach and Singer (1971) study seemed to produced such results. Children asked to restrict themselves to television diets of a violent nature appeared to exhibit less aggressiveness afterwards than children asked to restrict themselves to television diets of a non-violent nature. Later analysis of these findings revealed that the diets were not very well controlled. The children restricted to a non-violent television diet objected to the loss of favoured violent programs, and they were permitted limited exposure to such programs. There were several difficulties in the Feshbach and Singer study which are instructive, especially since this study has been quoted frequently to support the presentation of violence in the media. A brief digression to examine this study may therefore be in order.

In the Feshbach and Singer (1971) study, the observed significant *reduction* in aggressiveness following aggressive films was due entirely to results from boys living in three of the institutions participating in the study. These three institutions were three of the four homes for boys who had lacked adequate home care. Parenthetically, this



would suggest that, in contrast to the suggestions of some media spokesmen, television violence may have less aggressive effects on the more disadvantaged children than on the more advantaged children. By way of support for this suggestion, it is noteworthy that in the Feshbach and Singer study, the boys from the three private schools studied exhibited the usual *increase* in aggressiveness following exposure to aggressive films. Also, in replications of the Feshbach and Singer study, Wells (1972) and Parke, et al (1972) the reduction of aggressiveness following violent films was not confirmed, and instead the usual increase of aggressiveness following aggressive films was observed. But reduced aggressiveness following violent films was not the only finding of the Feshbach and Singer study.

The Feshbach and Singer study also showed an *increase* in aggressiveness following a diet of non-aggressive films. Quite apart from the reversal of these findings in the replications noted above, it was observed (Chaffee and McLeod, 1971) from Feshbach and Singer's own data that the boys in the non-aggressive television group liked their assigned programs significantly less than the boys in the aggressive television diet group. Perhaps the boys in the non-aggressive television group were more aggressive because they resented being restricted to non-aggressive programs. Indeed, grumbling, sullenness, disobedience, cursing or arguing were variables included in the aggressiveness measure which served as the dependent variable. Moreover, the boys in the institutions in which catharsis was later said to have appeared, who were subjected to the non-aggressive television diet, objected (objections were scored as aggression) so strongly at not being permitted to watch *Batman* that investigators permitted them to include *Batman* in their presumably non-aggressive television diets. This apparently minor variation between the treatment afforded the two experimental groups was a serious deviation from the demands of scientific method. The staff, having yielded to "a very strong objection" on the part of the boys on the non-aggressive television diet, may have encouraged such actions as grumbling, complaining, refusing tasks, or becoming sullen, which were then scored as aggressive conduct. In view of the contradictory

replications and the difficulties encountered in the Feshbach and Singer study described above, it seems appropriate to conclude that the Feshbach and Singer findings represent an error in the research literature in the field, and that the remainder of the literature justifies the conclusion that media violence breeds aggression and perhaps violence in consumer behaviour.

The second part of the argument, implying consumer need for violence, is derived from the apparent consumer demand for violent programming. It has been noted that books, magazines, newspapers, films and television programs which feature violence sell better than those which do not. It may be interesting, however, to ask what is the source of the consumer demand for violence. Most people are aware of the manner in which advertising works. Repeated exposure to any contents tends to increase a demand for those contents. This effect is enhanced greatly if the contents presented are associated with strong emotional stimuli such as those associated with violence or sex. It is possible that merely the repeated exposure to violent contents in the media across several years has created the demand for violent contents. This effect might well have been enhanced, for example, after World War II by interest on the part of participants in the events which they had experienced, which may have increased their interest temporarily in exposure to some violent contents. In turn, media programmers, aware of the demand for a class of violent contents in the media, may have over-reacted by presenting quantities of violent contents for the consumer market. Moreover, the limited demands for development of plot and character in stories featuring violence may have seduced both media people in their press to produce large quantities of entertainment materials, and the public which in seeking entertainment may not have reacted well to the challenge to thought and emotional reaction involved in well-developed characters and plots in literate stories, and have preferred instead the ease of response to story stereotypes and stereotypic characters. All of these features which differentiate violent and other contents, may have been operative in the years during which violent contents were increasingly apparent in the media. In any event, exposure to violence has certainly

been increasing in the media, and this could well be sufficient to create the apparent demand. The increase in violent contents have been studied for television where they were shown to have increased during the past twenty years from 17 per cent in 1955, to more than 60 per cent by 1962, to between 75 per cent and 80 percent by 1970 (Liebert, 1974) where it has remained fairly steadily from 1967 through 1971 (Gerbner, 1972a). There is no reason to assume that a steady exposure to pro-social contents in the media would not just as easily produce a consumer demand for pro-social contents, provided that the quality of the contents produced was equivalent to the quality of the contents which have been produced featuring violence, and provided that emotional elements were associated with contents presented.

#### *Media Exposure to Information about Violent Contents*

It seems possible that media folk have not yet been exposed to clear information about the effects of violence on human behaviour. One could certainly come to believe this from exposure to Efron's negative statement in the issue of *TV Guide* mentioned earlier. She lists several of the conclusions stated in the Surgeon General's Report on the subject. And she concludes from the nature of the statements made that the findings from the studies commissioned and quoted were ambiguous and inconclusive. She seems unaware of the difficulties under which the Surgeon General's Report was made, and it would therefore seem appropriate to enter a record here for the Royal Commission of the circumstances affecting the final form of that Report. The circumstances make it understandable that a reader might conclude that the findings were inconclusive.

The Surgeon General's inquiry started following several years of study and concern in the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, chaired by Senator Kefauver and, later, Senator Dodd. The Subcommittee's concerns led to the initiation of three network-dominated research efforts. One was never completed; one analysed inadequacies of research detrimental to industry interests; and

the third (Feshbach and Singer, 1971) produced results opposite in direction to the rest of the related research work – a study which has already received some attention in this appendix. Pressure was added from the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (1969), which also focussed on the role of the media. In 1969, the Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Communications encouraged the HEW Secretary to initiate empirical studies (Murray, 1973). The Secretary directed the Surgeon General to examine the effects of television on children. The Surgeon General requested academic and professional associations, distinguished scientists, the National Association of Broadcasters, and the three major networks to submit nominees for an advisory committee. There were 40 nominees. The networks were then asked to indicate which of the nominees were inappropriate for an impartial scientific investigation in the area of television and violence. This process eliminated seven distinguished men whose past research had demonstrated that television viewing produced aggressiveness, or who had made statements acknowledging a causal relationship between violent television contents and aggression. Five of the final twelve positions on the committee were filled by industry executives and consultants. Then, political pressure was exerted on the "scientific" advisory committee to produce a statement representing agreement among all members. The resulting statements surely were a foregone conclusion. Senator Pastore's later hearings on the studies revealed that the majority of non-network participants in the advisory committee felt that the data then available were strong enough to indicate a causal relationship between televised violence and aggressive behaviour. It is perhaps noteworthy that the press and television gave limited coverage to the Pastore hearings. A detailed analysis of the conditions of the Surgeon General's Report may be found in Liebert, et al (1973), whose conclusions are equivalent to those drawn by Goranson (1975), Murray (1973), and Liebert (1974). The apparently inconclusive conclusions of the Surgeon General's Report were surely dictated by the manner in which the Report was prepared.

It would seem to be of critical importance that

media personnel who produce the contents to which consumers are exposed, and whose attitudes tend to get wide exposure, should be properly informed about the effects of their media on the human consumer. And it may surely be necessary to provide adequate controls to insure that media folk are properly educated in this important aspect of their work.

## Appendix C

### *Effects of Media Depicted Violence on the Evocation of Violent Behaviour*

This appendix represents the main core of the positions taken in this brief. It will therefore be a bit more complex than the other Appendices. Although it is beyond the scope of this brief to present an extensive and detailed review of the whole literature in the area of this inquiry, this appendix will attempt to present an overview of some aspects of the research which has been undertaken on the effects of exposure to media violence, and it will seek to summarize conclusions which may be drawn in an appropriate light. It is, of course, important to note at the outset that most of the research literature in the area has focused on film and television.

Since there are clearly many other factors which influence the evocation of violent behaviour and aggressive attitudes, exploring the effects of media presented violence is a very complex task. Research in the area is made the more difficult because of the many practical and ethical constraints on the researcher exploring the area. Nevertheless, the importance of the whole field of inquiry makes it important to try the exercise.

For convenience, the following inquiry into the possibility that media violence increases aggressive behaviour is divided into two general parts, namely, experiments on imitation, and experiments on what might be called instigation or disinhibition. These sections are followed by a more general presentation of the factors affecting the effects of media violence on behaviour, and then by a general argument.

#### *Experiments on Imitation*

These experiments attempt to answer the question: Can aggressive behaviour be learned by observation of a film or television model, and can responses be learned in this way which were not previously in the person's repertoire of responses? In a typical experiment, one group of subjects is shown a model on television performing novel aggressive acts. Other groups are shown neutral films or no films. In the post-test, the number of those novel aggressive acts performed by the

subjects from all groups are observed, recorded and measured.

Bandura was a pioneer in this type of experiment. It is central to the theory of learning, which he has developed from his experimental work, that imitation of a model is a powerful form of learning. At present, however, we are concerned only with his experiments using aggressive behaviour on the part of a film or television model. A classic experiment was that by Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963b). In this experiment children saw a simulated television programme in which an adult model or a cartoon cat aggressed in novel ways against an inflated plastic doll – for example, hitting it with a mallet, and the like. The post-test recorded these sorts of novel aggressive responses in a play situation where the children had access to those objects which had been seen receiving the aggression. The result was that, compared to control subjects who had not seen the aggressive films, subjects exposed to the aggressive model showed more novel aggressive responses; those who observed the human model aggressing showed more aggressive responses than those who had observed the cartoon model aggressing. These authors also found that the filmed model was as effective as live models in evoking imitative behaviour.

A number of similar experiments have been carried out. More than twenty were listed in the Surgeon General's Report (1972). One replication might be quoted because it also tests the effects of aggression against live human beings (Hanratty, et al, 1969). In this experiment, children were shown an adult filmed model aggress against a clown. For half of the subjects the object of the aggression was an inflated plastic clown, and for the other half of the subjects it was a live clown. The models performed aggressive acts, such as use of a mallet or a toy gun. In the post-test the children had access to the latter objects, as well as to an inflated plastic clown and a live clown. All subjects, regardless of the films they had seen, aggressed against the plastic clown, but those who saw aggressive films did so more than those who did not; only those who saw an aggressive film aggressed against the live human clown.

Some recent experiments by Kniveton (1973, 1974) with British children also concluded that



imitation will consistently occur after children see films showing aggression, even although the characters and settings may be varied from film situation to post-test situation.

Bandura (1965b) draws a distinction between learning and performance. Children saw a filmed model performing novel acts of aggression, both verbal and physical. The model was either rewarded, punished, or given no consequence. The results were that most imitation occurred among subjects who saw the models rewarded or given no consequence; least imitation occurred among those seeing the model punished. However, the experimenter then offered incentives contingent upon the subjects' reproducing the model's behaviour. Thereupon all subjects showed high imitation, with no differences between groups. Bandura concluded that observation alone produced learning, but that the actual performance of the learned responses depended upon other conditions, in this case the incentive offered.

Most of these studies on imitation span a short time interval. However, some experiments have shown that the effects can be quite long lasting. Hicks (1965, 1968), for example, showed that after one ten-minute exposure to a television model, the imitative effect could still be obtained six months later, and in another study as long as eight months later. At these delayed post-test times, 40 per cent of the television model's aggressive responses were still being reproduced. Kniveton (1973), studying boys five to six years old, observed during play, found that aggressive films influenced behaviour immediately following the aggressive film, and still at intervals up to five months later. In this work, the long-lasting tendency was particularly marked in working-class children.

There is also anecdotal evidence in the area of imitation of responses. It has frequently been observed that following movie, television or news coverage of a spectacular crime, there is likely to be a rash of imitations. Liebert has some videotapes of children watching television action and imitating it. In one case, a boy watching a sequence of a knight drawing a sword is seen at the same time drawing his pocket knife.

Studies of imitation consistently lead to the conclusion that there is a causal relationship

between exposure to aggressive television or film models and the learning of new aggressive responses by the viewer. There are limitations to this type of experiment. Since they are conducted in laboratory settings, the question can be raised whether their results can be generalized to the real-life situation. There may also be criticisms of the types of measures of aggression use. For example, it might be questioned whether aggression against a plastic doll should not properly be regarded as play rather than as true aggression. However, experiments have also shown attacks on live human beings. Also, although most of the experiments have shown their effects only over short durations, some have shown the same effects over quite long durations.

### *Experiment on Instigation*

This group of studies examines the question whether exposure to television or film violence increases only the probability of related types of aggression, or whether it increases also the general level of aggressive behaviour. That is, the question is now raised whether observational learning is confined in its effects to newly learned aggression, or includes other responses already in the subject's aggressive repertoire. Bandura (1969) refers to this more general phenomenon as disinhibition of aggression. Some of the experiments relevant to this question have been carried out in the lab, some in the field, and some of the research is survey research.

The typical *laboratory* experiment in instigation consists of exposing some subjects to a violent television program, others to a non-violent program, and others to no program. Following these experiences, various post-test measures are taken, some in free play, but very often in a situational test. A situational test might involve, for example, the subject being informed that by pressing a button he can deliver an electric shock to a person in the next room; he is instructed to press the button to indicate to the person in the next room how well the latter is performing a task. In reality, there is no person in the next room, but the intensity, duration, and frequency with which the subject presses the button serves as a measure of his aggression. Liebert and Baron (1972) used a

variation of this procedure. They told children serving as subjects that a child in the next room was playing a game in which he had to turn a handle. The subject was told that whenever a light came on he could either press a green button marked "help", which would make the child's handle easier to turn, or he could press a red button marked "hurt", which would make the handle hot and therefore harder to turn. Other measures have included paper-and-pencil questionnaires about aggressive feelings.

An early experiment by Lovaas (1961) found that following an aggressive cartoon, children were more aggressive with toys than after a less aggressive cartoon. Mussen and Rutherford (1961) worked with Grade One children, of whom half were first frustrated by a repetitive task plus criticism. Children were then exposed either to an aggressive, or to a non-aggressive, cartoon, or to no cartoon. The post-test consisted of questions regarding the child's desire to pop a balloon. Their results showed no difference between the frustrated and non-frustrated subjects, but the aggressive cartoon resulted in increased aggressive impulses.

Liebert and Baron (1972) carried out a  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  factorial experiment in which sex, age five to six or eight to nine, and aggressive television (The Untouchables) or non-aggressive television (exciting sports sequence) were varied. The post-test involved the opportunity to aggress or not to aggress against a peer by pressing the "hurt" or "help" button mentioned previously. The results showed that the aggressive television was followed by longer "attacks" on the "victim", and also a higher level of aggression in free play.

This sort of result may occur with adults, as well as with child subjects. Walters and Thomas (1962) found that male hospital attendants, after seeing a movie of a knife fight, gave more intense "shocks" than others who did not see the movie. Berkowitz and Geen (1966) showed one group of college students a prize fight scene from the movie *A Champion*, in which the hero gets badly beaten up, and another group of students a film of an exciting track meet. The subjects were previously insulted by the experimenter. The results showed that the aggressive film led to subjects delivering more "shocks" than the non-aggressive film. Meyer

(1972) worked with male undergraduates who were shown a verbally violent film, or an exciting but non-violent film, or no film. He found that the verbally violent film caused subjects to deliver more "shocks" to a person who had previously angered them, than the non-violent film or no film.

Some experimenters, however, have obtained contrary findings. Feshbach (1966) worked with college students who had previously either been insulted or not insulted by the experimenter's unwarranted critical remarks, and then were shown either an aggressive film (the prize fight scene) or a neutral film. The post-test consisted of a word association test and a questionnaire about the subject's attitudes toward the experimenter. The results showed a significant interaction. For the insulted subjects, the aggressive film led to significantly *less* aggression than the neutral film on both the word association and questionnaire measures. For the non-insulted subjects the aggressive film led to *more* aggression than the neutral film, but on the word association test only. These results were interpreted by the author to be consistent with the catharsis hypothesis which was discussed in the last Appendix (B). However, these results are in direct contradiction to the results obtained in the Berkowitz and Geen (1966) study discussed in the last paragraph. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the Feshbach study is in error. A couple of other studies have produced results which are generally consistent with those reported by Feshbach, and thus are consistent with the so-called catharsis hypothesis.

Holz (1971) undertook a study employing undergraduate subjects. In this study, after exposure to high violence television there was significantly lower hostility on the Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration test and the Thematic Apperception Test, than after low violence television or no television. In a study by Manning and Taylor (1975) subjects were either angered or not, and then were shown an aggressive or a neutral film. The post-test measured hostility and aggressive responses. They concluded that angered subjects had significantly higher aggressive scores, but that the aggressive film lowered the aggressive scores. One difficulty with some of the studies which support the catharsis hypothesis is that they employ psychological tests of personality as their

dependent measures. And there remains considerable controversy in the test literature concerning whether fantasy aggression responses on tests reflect or predict increased aggressive behaviour in life, increased fantasy aggression in life, or reduced aggressive behaviour associated with increased fantasy representing increased indirect aggression.

Certainly, the conflicting results obtained in some areas of research in the field of the present inquiry indicate that not all the answers about the influence of other variables on the effects of media violence on aggressive behaviour are known. Some of the variables which have been found to influence the outcomes of similar experiments will be discussed later. However, a majority of studies point to a causative effect of exposure to media violence increasing the tendency to aggressive behaviour. There have been many studies which confirm this conclusion. More than thirty such studies were listed in the Surgeon General's Report (1972). The positive findings have been obtained with a wide variety of subjects under a variety of conditions, although, as the Surgeon General's Report cautiously concludes, the exposure does not necessarily affect all subjects all of the time. Limitations of these experiments are again similar to those mentioned for the experiments on imitation. Those thus far quoted on instigation were conducted in laboratory settings, which raises the question as to how far the results obtained can be generalized to real life. These experiments have also dealt with brief exposure and limited time intervals for the observation of the effects. Subjects tend to have been shown excerpts rather than full-length television programs which would likely contain other kinds of behaviour to model, in addition to the violent behaviour shown. In addition, in the laboratory experiments, subjects have nothing else to do, and are thus usually paying attention to the film, whereas, in real life, they might be doing any number of other things, such as reading, and thus not paying much attention to the violent behaviour being modelled.

Some of the measures used could also be regarded as somewhat artificial. Pressing a button to "shock" an ostensible "victim" from whom no feedback is obtained, as he is neither seen nor

heard, may imply to the subject that the situation is safe, and that it is permissible to deliver the aggressive response. However, some experiments have been mounted which yield a validation of this type of measurement. For example, Hartmann (1969) worked with delinquent adolescent boys who were either angered or not, then shown either an aggressive or neutral film. He obtained the usual result that exposure to the aggressive film led to subjects delivering more shocks, regardless of whether they had been angered or not. However, he also noted that those subjects who had histories involving greater amounts of aggression delivered more shocks than did the other boys. Similar validation was obtained by Wolf and Baron (1971), who worked with male college students and male violent inmates in a maximum security prison. After exposure to a live model, they found that, as expected, subjects of both types who saw the aggressive model delivered stronger "shocks" than those who saw a non-aggressive model. However, they also found that the inmates delivered more shocks than the college students.

The typical *field* experiment on instigation obviates some of the disadvantages of the laboratory experiments, being carried out under naturalistic conditions with reasonably real-life types of measures.

Steuer, Applefield and Smith (1971), for example, worked with pre-school children in a nursery school setting. They measured the inter-personal physical aggression among the children. Matched pairs were selected, matched according to the amount of time they watched television at home. After a baseline period of ten sessions, one of each pair watched an aggressive cartoon while the other watched a non-aggressive television program, on each of 11 days. They showed that, by the end of 11 days, there was a significant difference between the two groups, with those children exposed to the aggressive cartoon emitting a higher frequency of aggressive behaviour than the matched subjects who saw the neutral program.

Stein and Friedrich (1972) again observed pre-schoolers in a nursery school setting, both in free play and in the classroom. After a baseline measurement period lasting three weeks, subjects



were exposed for four weeks to either an aggressive television program (*Batman* or *Superman*), or a neutral selection of television programs (such as sports), or a pro-social program (*Mister Roger's Neighborhood*). They were then observed over a further two-week period. The results showed that children who viewed the aggressive program were more likely to act aggressively, and this effect endured over the two-week post-viewing observation period. However, this effect held only for those children who were initially above the median in their levels of aggression.

A contrary finding was obtained by Feshbach and Singer (1971). This experiment was done with 13-year-old boys in several institutions. The experimenters set out to control the television diets of the boys over a period of six weeks, such that boys had either a diet of programs judged to be violent (*Bonanza*, *I Spy*, *The Rifleman*, *The Untouchables*), or a diet of programs judged to be non-violent (*Andy Williams*, *Gomer Pyle*, *Petticoat Junction*). A number of measures were taken, including daily behaviour ratings of various aspects of physical aggression, questionnaires, projective tests, and the like. The results showed that the boys exposed to non-aggressive television diets were more aggressive than boys exposed to aggressive television diets. Some of the difficulties of this study were discussed in Appendix B. However, the results do contradict most other results of related studies, and are in turn contradicted in two replications of this study (Wells, 1972; Parke, et al, 1972).

The typical survey research on instigation is concerned with the search for correlations between some measure of exposure to television violence or of a preference for violent television, and some measure of aggression. The latter include self-ratings, ratings by peers, teachers or parents, and the like.

Some early studies correlated the availability of television to the subjects and the subjects' aggressiveness. These studies dealt with availability, and not with amount of television watched or the amount of violent television watched. One experiment, by Himmelweit, et al (1958), found no differences on parents' and teachers' ratings of aggression between children who had television in

the home and those who did not. Another experiment, however, by Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961), found that, in some groups of children, there was higher aggression in those children whose homes provided high exposure to television plus low exposure to print, than in those children whose low exposure to television plus high exposure to print. This did not hold for all groups of children. However, the authors concluded that television may stimulate aggression in subjects who are already frustrated. Still, it should be recalled that these studies were conducted at a time when the amount of violence exhibited on television was still quite low – between 17 per cent and 60 per cent of programs (Liebert, 1974).

More recently, McIntyre and Teevan (1972), compared the list of favourite programs with subjects' self-reports of deviant behaviours in 2,300 junior and senior high school students. They found a positive and significant relationship, showing that the more violent the programs preferred, the more deviant the behaviour, and the greater the attitude of approval of deviant behaviour. However, the highest correlation was of the order of .16. In another study, Robinson and Bachman (1972), correlated the number of hours of television watched as well as aggressiveness of favourite programs, with self-reports of aggressiveness, in 1,500 older adolescents. The results showed a tendency for those who preferred violent television to be more aggressive. The authors concluded that television violence is facilitating and reinforcing for subjects who are already high in violence.

Dominick and Greenberg (1972), compared exposure to television violence with scores on the children's approval of violence and willingness to use it, for 454 boys in grades four to six. They concluded that higher exposure to television violence is associated with greater approval of violence and greater willingness to use it in real life. McLeod, Atkin, and Chaffee (1972), studying adolescents, measured television violence viewing, self-report of aggressive tendencies, and reports by others of aggressiveness. They found a significant positive correlation between violence viewing and reports of aggressive behaviour, the average correlation being of the order of +.31.

One important study looked at the correlation



between exposure to violence on television and aggressive behaviour over the long term (Lefkowitz, Eron, Walder, and Huesmann, 1972). They had previously done a study of 875 pupils in Grade Three, and, in boys, had found the usual significant positive correlation between the amount of aggression as rated by peers. In a follow-up study ten years later with 211 of the boys and 216 of the original girls, now in Grade 13, they carried out similar measures. For the girls, the only significant relationship was between aggression in Grade Three and aggression in Grade 13. However, in the boys there was also a significant correlation between violence viewed in Grade Three and aggressive behaviour in Grade 13; that is, a significant relationship over a period of ten years in duration. From their analysis of these relationships, and through their cross lagged correlations (Figure 1), they concluded that there was a causal relationship between television violence viewed in Grade Three and aggressiveness of behaviour in Grade 13.

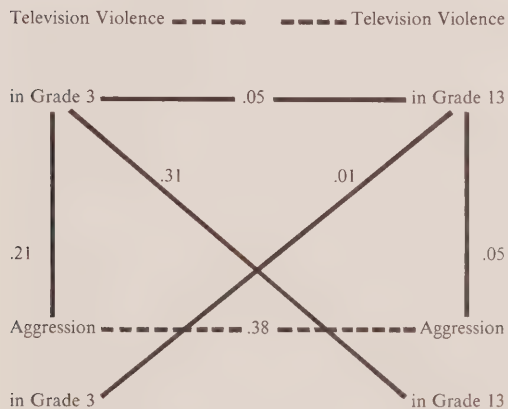


Figure 1: Correlations (cross lagged) for 211 boys from Lefkowitz, et al, 1972

Consensus from survey types of research, especially supported by the consensus found in laboratory and field types of research, points strongly to a relationship between viewing of televised violence and aggressive behaviour. The survey studies have been carried out on large

samples of subjects in natural settings, with subjects being exposed naturalistically to real television programs.

Still, there remains the problem of inferring a casual relationship. It is possible that exposure to televised violence causes aggression; it is also possible, from some of the survey studies, that a tendency to behave aggressively causes some people to seek greater exposure to television violence; it also remains possible that some other, unspecified variable accounts for the observed relationships. For example, it is possible that family attitude toward aggression could, if it is positive, result both in increased violence viewing, and in increased aggressive behaviour.

Some researchers have looked closely at the problem of causality. Lefkowitz, et al (1972) examined the pattern of their correlations rather complexly, and concluded that viewed television violence is a long-term cause of aggressiveness. Another approach has involved partialling out the effects of other possible variables affecting the relationship, to observe whether the effects remain with other variables' effects removed. Workers such as McLeod, Atkin, and Chaffee (1972) have attempted this with variables such as total viewing time, socio-economic status, school performance, type of parental punishment, parental affection, perceived learning of aggression, and the like. The results showed that the correlations between television violence viewed and aggression remained positive and significant, and in many cases remained unchanged. Chaffee and McLeod (1971) also analyzed the process of possible causation by testing secondary hypotheses, involving the role of intermediary variables that might cause the relationship. They also concluded from this analysis that the causation proceeds from television violence viewing to aggressive behaviour, rather than the reverse.

In summary, there is a considerable amount of support for the hypothesis that viewing television violence causes aggressive behaviour, although it remains impossible entirely to rule out other hypotheses. If the hypothesis is correct, however, then viewing television violence accounts for as much as ten per cent of the variance of aggressive behaviour.

## General Overview

If there is one thing that psychologists have amply, adequately, and repeatedly demonstrated in the last several years, it is that people imitate behaviour which they see demonstrated by others, regardless of whether that behaviour occurs in real life situations or in fictitious situations. This is clearly true for both children and adults, although it is probably true that the younger the individual, the more likely he is to imitate.

Not only is it clear that children imitate what they see, but it is also particularly true that children are very prone to imitate behaviour which is associated with strong feeling, such as aggressive or hurtful behaviour. The number of studies that have been addressed to this problem in the last 15 years is impressive – and equally impressive are the results which have been obtained. Decent, middle-class, responsible children when exposed to a situation in which someone else displays or models hurtful behaviour, adopt that behaviour as their own. The variety of situations researchers have employed to test out this phenomenon is legion. For example, children who watched 20 minutes daily of *Batman* and *Superman* over a four-week period, and who were subsequently observed in their natural school setting, when compared with children put on a daily fare of programs such as *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, were much rougher and much more aggressive in their play behaviour. It is true that there are no studies that show that children exposed to a diet of media violence go out into the street and steal, maim or kill. But it does seem likely that pushing, shoving, and hitting playmates in order to get things a child wants, is probably on the same continuum as beating up strangers in order to get their money or possessions. The similarity is at least sufficient to make one very uncomfortable about the futures of some of our children who see huge doses of anti-social behaviour on their television screens. Those who are the playground bullies today, and they are certainly helped to be that by the violence to which they are exposed on the mass media, could very easily be the criminals of tomorrow.

Not all children who see violence on television or in the movies become more aggressive. An

amazing number do, and they are children from decent, respectable homes; but some others do not. Some parents, it would seem, are successful in, as it were, innoculating their children against the pernicious effects of violence in the mass media. Psychologists have some idea about how these parents succeed in helping their children to become immune. They work actively to foster pro-social behaviour; by example and by direct teaching, they instill in their children notions of concern for others, of sharing and helping, and of always being aware of the effects one's behaviour has on others. They encourage cooperation and discourage destructive competition. They are active in their disapproval of violent and destructive behaviour; and when it occurs they attempt to see that it is not successful. And they certainly point out the unfortunate consequences of such behaviour for the victim. Above all, they do not model aggressive behaviour themselves. They are an example to their children of the fact that it is possible to function successfully in life without imposing superior force on others.

This parenting task is not an easy one, especially in the world of today. And, unhappily, it would appear that not all that many parents are even attempting to undertake this task. A psychologist has written as follows: "Particularly since World War II many changes have occurred in patterns of child rearing . . . but their essence may be conveyed in a single sentence: children used to be brought up by their parents. Not that many years ago the extended family was the rule. Aunts, uncles, grandparents, older cousins and siblings – they were all involved in the process of child rearing. They all assumed responsibility for the welfare – moral and otherwise – of a child. If one person fell down on the job, another was there to take his or her place. But such is not the case today. The family has shrunk to include only mother and father". And if they do not do the job – and many unfortunately do not – there is no person to replace them. The school is not doing it, nor should it. The church, which was once influential in training children in moral values, is no longer the powerful force it once was.

If children are not spending time with their parents learning the kinds of values which would make this world freer of the kind of violence and

mindless destruction which we are witnessing today, if they are not learning these at school or within the confines of some religious system, then where are they spending their time, and where are they learning about the nature of the world? The answer is that they are spending a great deal of their time in front of the television set. Second grade children spend an average of 17 hours a week watching television, and the figure goes up to 28 hours per week for sixth grade children. More intelligent children, and those from economically better off homes spend more time watching television than those with lower IQs and from lower social class backgrounds. By the time the average child is 16 years old, he has spent 12,000 to 15,000 hours watching television. That is, he has spent the equivalent of 15 to 20 months, 24 hours a day, sitting in front of the television screen. This, then, is where children are receiving the major part of their training in how to deal with the world in which they are growing up. And when one looks at what they are seeing on the television screen, horror and fearful misgiving is clearly the indicated reaction.

Clearly, the problems with today's society are not justifiably laid wholly or even in very large part at the door of the television industry. Their sources lie in large part elsewhere. However, it would be rather difficult to undertake a major reconstruction of society's fabric. What would be much easier to do, surely, is to realize that many parents have allowed television to take over much of their job. And television is not doing a very good job. We ought to be taking advantage of its potential for producing responsible citizens, instead of letting it contribute to the production of irresponsible citizens. Television could be a tremendous source for good in a world where it is surely needed. It has already done a great deal to widen children's horizons, to aid them in creativity, to acquaint them with a world that their parents never even knew existed. But it has also done a tremendous amount of harm, and this harm should be stopped. It is most appropriate to realize the important part that television plays in the lives of children, and try to make that influence a constructive one.

There are many things that could be done. Incentives could be offered to people in the

communications industry to produce material that would promote good citizenship. Such material does not need to be dull, boring, or unsalable. Witness the success of *Sesame Street*. Even adults could probably successfully and profitably be amused by something other than mindless violence. And censorship should be introduced, at least for children. Censorship has come to be a bad word, but mainly because of its implication of selective deletion of political and economic information by government to maintain power. Censorship is applied against hazardous chemicals which might otherwise get on the consumer market with dangerous consequences. The same ought to apply to any materials which are known to be hazardous to the good of mankind. At least the television to which children are being exposed should be censored, since they are not yet trained in how to handle information they receive. And one might fairly guess that a great many adults also handle information they receive from the media rather poorly. Moreover, the kind of censorship being applied by the communications industry in its attempt at self control is frightening. The idea of the industry's censorship seems to be to clean up the violence that they portray. This is absolutely the wrong approach. It leaves children with the idea that there is nothing wrong with violence because it never causes bleeding or pain or evidences of suffering. If violence is to be portrayed, let it be realistic, showing the horror of its outcome.

## Appendix D

### *Some Variables Relevant to the Evocation of Aggressiveness from Media Violence*

This appendix is devoted to the attempt to show, in broad outline, how media violence has the effect of evoking aggressive behaviour in consumers. The last Appendix (C) sought to show that media violence can evoke aggressive behaviour in the consumer, and to show the main means by which this effect occurs, namely, imitation. The present appendix seeks to pursue some of the other variables which may also be involved. This appendix contains two sections, one concerned with variables which appear to interact with the effects obtained with media violence, and the other concerned with variables which may mediate some of the effects achieved by media violence.

### *Some Variables affecting the Outcomes of Media Violence Studies*

#### I: SUBJECT CHARACTERISTICS

*Sex differences* have been noted in studies of the effects of media violence on behaviour. Generally, females appear to be less susceptible to violent media influences than males. Some studies find a significant effect with boys, but not with girls. This difference was noted, for example, in studies by Lefkowitz, et al (1972), Bandura, et al (1963), and Hicks (1965). However, other studies, such as those by Berkowitz and Rawlings (1963) and Mussen and Rutherford (1961), found no differences between the sexes. Perhaps because of the training afforded females in non-violence, it would appear that women are less likely than men to learn violence from the media.

*Age* may be another variable affecting the effects of media violence on behaviour. Although the effects of media violence on behaviour have been observed in all age groups which have been studied, there seems to be a general consensus that adults are somewhat less susceptible than children to media violence effects. This has been explained by pointing to the limited reality experience of children, and their relative inability to discriminate fiction from fact and to test reality precisely. Moreover, it is argued that the behaviour patterns

of adults are more likely to be formed and thus less susceptible to modelled influence, while children's behaviour patterns are being formed and they have little by way of strong habit to inhibit new influences. While these arguments may be sound, it is also possible that researchers are just as susceptible to faulty interpretation based upon their own personal experience as anyone else. That is, it is possible that the age difference argument is made less on the strength of real evidence, and more on the strength of the personal belief that "adults like me" can resist undesired influences. The presumed age differences in susceptibility to influences from media violence may, therefore, be more apparent than real.

*Social class* may have an effect on influences from media violence on behaviour. Kniveton (1973, 1974) found differences in effects according to social class. Effects were greater in working-class than in middle-class boys. His interpretation was that children with less ability to develop their own interests were more likely to be influenced, than others.

*Aggressiveness* of consumers has frequently appeared to influence the results of studies of the effects of media violence on behaviour. The effect is more likely to be obtained in children who are initially more aggressive. Although not obtained in all studies, this effect was observed, for example, in studies by Stein and Friedrich (1972), Wells (1972), and Feshbach and Singer (1971). Moreover, the experimental effect is more likely to be obtained in angered subjects than in non-angered ones (eg., Berkowitz and Rawlings, 1963). A related finding in a study by Ekman, et al (1972) noted that boys whose facial expressions were positive and involved while watching aggression in the television program *The Untouchables*, were more likely to make hurting responses in the post-test than boys who appeared displeased while viewing the show.

II: *Stimulus Characteristics of the Model* have been noted which affect the probability and extent of later imitation. In general, high-status models tend to be imitated more than low-status models; highly competent or heroic models tend to be imitated more than less competent models.



Meanwhile, negative evaluations of the model's aggression can affect the outcome. For example, Hicks (1968), working with five to nine year olds, found that if a co-observer emitted negative evaluations of the model's aggression during viewing of a program, imitation tended to be suppressed during the post-test if the co-observer was present. In another study, Grusec (1973) showed five to ten year olds a film in which an adult female model carried out distinctive aggressive or neutral actions. During the viewing of the film, an experimenter made positive, negative or neutral remarks about the model's behaviour. During the post-test, the five year olds' imitation of either the aggressive or neutral actions occurred regardless of the co-observer's evaluations; with the ten year olds, however, there was more imitation in the positive or neutral evaluation condition than in the negative one.

*Peer models* appear, on the whole, to evoke more imitation than non-peer models such as adults. Hicks (1966), working with three to six year olds, found, as usual, that subjects who were exposed to aggressive films showed more imitation of aggression than controls. However, there was significantly more imitation of a peer male model than there was of an adult male model, or than of a peer female model.

*Characteristics of the Victim* have also influenced the modelling effect. Hartman (1969) employed subjects who had been angered or not, and then showed them a film which either focussed on the victim's pain or on the instrumental aggression. As usual, he found that the aggressive film led subjects to deliver more "shocks" to a "victim", and the angered subjects tended to deliver more "shocks" than the non-angered subjects. However, he also found that angered subjects who saw the victim's pain in the film became more aggressive than those who saw the instrumental aggression, whereas, with the non-angered subjects, the reverse was observed.

*Consequences for the Model*, or, as this has been called, vicarious re-inforcement, has been shown to influence the outcomes of studies of the effects of media violence on aggressive behaviour. Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961) showed children a film in which a boy, Rocky, takes another boy's, Johnny's, toys, and aggresses in various other

ways. For some of the children Rocky is then shown to be rewarded by getting the toys plus candy, and for some of the children he is shown as being punished, and beaten up and repulsed by Johnny. In the post-test, which consisted of observation of 20 minutes of play with other children, the subjects who saw the aggressive model rewarded showed significantly more aggressive imitation than those who saw the model punished. Similar results were obtained by Bandura, Ross and Ross (1963), to be mentioned later, and by Bandura (1965a). However, Bandura points out that, even in the case of the punished model, the aggressive behaviour is learned by the observer. This learned behaviour may not appear immediately, depending upon the reinforcement conditions, but is available to appear if later circumstances favour it. Another study by Albert (1967) found that extra-punitiveness, as measured by the Rosenzweig Picture Frustration test, increased after children saw a film in which Hopalong Cassidy aggressed successfully. In this connection, it is noteworthy that, in many film programs, the villain aggresses and then gets punished by the hero of the film, this punishment often being in the form of violence. The above suggests that the observer may learn both forms of aggression.

*The Context of Behaviour* can also affect the outcome of studies. An obvious example of this is that of the reinforcement contingency prevailing when the subject has the opportunity to respond following exposure to filmed violence. This phenomenon is illustrated in the study by Bandura, Ross and Ross (1963c). One aspect of this phenomenon includes the persons present during the post-test. Martin, Gelfand and Hartmann (1971) found that, following exposure to an aggressive model, children in a play situation showed much less aggression relative to controls if an adult was present. However, if a peer was present, the amount of aggression was increased relative to controls.

*Interpretation* or meaning of aggressive behaviour has been found to affect its susceptibility to imitation. The following three studies all used the prize fight excerpt from the film *Champion* in which the hero gets beaten up. Berkowitz and Alioto (1973) showed that angered

subjects exhibited more aggression following this film if they had previously been told that it was a film of a real grudge match than if they were told it was a professional match, or else fiction. Geen and Stonner (1974) showed that subjects gave more “shocks”, had higher blood pressure, and rated themselves as less restrained, if prior to seeing the film they were told it illustrated revenge, than if they were told it was a professional match, or if no comments were given. Geen and Rakosky (1973) demonstrated that subjects showed fewer GSRs during the film if they were told it was fiction than if they were told it was revenge or a professional match. In another study, by Feshbach and Feshbach (1973), children were shown a videotape of a campus riot. Those children who were told that it was a newsreel and that it was a real occurrence were more aggressive than children who were told it was a Hollywood movie.

*Realism* of the media presentation, as perceived by the consumer, has proved to produce similar results. Hapkiewicz and Stone (1973) showed boys six to ten years of age, either a real life aggressive film, or an aggressive cartoon, or a non-aggressive film. They found that the realistic film led to more aggression in play than the other films, and there was no difference between the other two types of films. Bandura, Ross and Ross (1963b) found that a real adult model led to more imitative aggression than did a cartoon model, although the latter also led to more imitation of aggression than was found in the control group. Noble (1973) found that children aged five to seven, played more destructively after seeing filmed realistic aggression than those who saw filmed aggression stylistically presented. It seems probable that the effect of realism occurs more with older children than with younger children. It has been argued that younger children do not discriminate well between realism and fiction, and that they are influenced mainly by the amount of aggression contained. This contention may have some relevance to the effects of news on adults. News is presented realistically, and is presented as though it depicted reality. Perhaps violent news coverage has an equivalent effect on adults as violent fictional content has on children.

*Justification* of aggression presented in associ-

ation with filmed violence also appears to have effects on the imitation of modelled aggression. This variable has been studied in several studies from Berkowitz' laboratory. Berkowitz (1965b) and Berkowitz and Rawlings (1963) showed the prize fight film to angered subjects. Half of them were told that the victim was bad and deserved the beating; and half were led to feel sympathetic toward the victim. In the justified condition subjects gave more “shocks” to the confederate who had previously angered them. Berkowitz concludes, therefore, that there is danger involved in media presentations where the villain meets physical aggression for his villainy. Although it would seem socially appropriate or desirable for a film villain to get his just desserts, the consequences should not be in the form of physical aggression. If the consequences are in the form of physical aggression, it might incite a frustrated person to take what he believes to be justified aggressive action against another.

#### *Some Variables Contributing to Observational Learning From Media Violence*

Although *modelling* or *imitation* are probably the strongest sources of media effects on behaviour, there probably are others which also contribute to these effects. Some of these other contributing factors are discussed in this section without further reference to modelling, which has been the major method of media influence discussed up to this point.

*Circumstances*, which are typically associated with media exposure, are probably important factors affecting learning from the media. Most consumers are exposed to media material under relatively ideal conditions for observational learning. Most people consume media contents in the comfort of their homes, when they are most likely to be most *relaxed*, and most susceptible to passively being influenced by observational material without the normal critical and defensive processes alert. Consumers are often *eating* while being exposed to media contents, for example, when the newspaper is read over breakfast, or when snacks are being nibbled while watching television. Since most media contents are exposed to consumers in the home, and *family interactions*

may serve to reinforce the learning which takes place. Thus, the media may provide parents with contents around which to instruct their children, and children may interpret any non-committal reactions, or positive responses, or non-reaction by the parents as approval or agreement with the exposed media contents. The very fact of mutual involvement within the family, whether explicit or implicit, around media contents, may well serve to enhance any learning which may have occurred. The very implicit *realism* of media contents, which probably helps to select the media to which various ages expose themselves, also probably enhances the learning which takes place. For children, television, which is their main media fare, is like a photographic representation of reality, which is only enhanced when the television picture is in colour. This picture-like quality undoubtedly creates the impression of demanding reality for the child. For the adult, who has learned that much of television fare is fictional, involving the use of actors, the media fare is often such things as the news, newspapers, or journal articles ostensibly by experts. These contents may well be separated in the adult mind from the fictional, and thus carry the implication of representing reality. Most ages appear to seek media contents which are perceived as reflecting reality, which has been shown earlier in this appendix to enhance the learning of behaviour from media contents.

*Cultural* factors probably contribute to the learning of aggression from the media. Newscasters and commentators, like the rest of society, can fall victim to the idea that violence and aggression pay, which is something that the motion picture industry, television, radio, and newspapers have both taught the public, and learned from the public they have taught (Larsen, 1968). Consequently, the media are all too ready to provide coverage for all sorts of violent actions, calling them, euphemistically, newsworthy or sensational. It is little surprise, then, that vested interest groups have quickly learned that the best way to get free coverage, and thus public attention for their causes, is to stage violent or destructive demonstrations. In this way, the media appear to have created, nurtured, and perpetuated a whole sub-culture in which violence and destruction, or

at the very least demonstration and protest, are almost a way of life. This effect is enhanced by some consequences of the urbanization process which has been taking place. As urbanization increases, and cities grow, individuals tend increasingly to lose their sense of specialness and importance – each person each day sees multitudes of people who are in no discriminable way different from himself. Public recognition through the media, which is most easily achieved by means of some “sensational” action, is perhaps the best way available to most city people to feel a bit different or important. Thus, the selection by media folk of aggressive content for media presentation, especially in news coverage, may serve quite directly to reward and reinforce anti-social behaviour in individuals or groups. This effect is not limited to protest and demonstration. It is as apparent in the world of sport. Media folk are probably as vocal as any other group in their disapproval of violence in sport. And yet it is surely media personnel who most strongly draw attention to violence in sport activities, and by drawing attention to such violence, probably both increase its prevalence by facilitating imitation, and reward it directly by the public attention which, in the long run, is likely responsible for the economic advancement of individuals, teams and sports which promote or use violence in sports. It seems possible, that is, that giving coverage in newscasts to violent behaviour or sports supports both the imitation of the violence and its repetition, by the provision of rewards economically and in attention.

There are *institutional* factors which probably are affected by media presentations to increase violence. Only two of these will be noted here. Organized crime has long been a source of violence in society. It is at least debatable that the media have assisted in reducing this source of violence. It may be, as media people seem to think, that exposing organized crime to public scrutiny serves to reduce the power of organized crime. It may equally be true that presentations about organized crime in the media serve mainly to enhance its criminal activities. On the one hand, it is possible that films such as *The Godfather* create a sort of sympathy for organized crime, picturing it as a victim of a repressive and



unconcerned society, which may enhance its image and thus imitation of its actions (Bramel, et al, 1968; Hartmann, 1965). On the other hand, it is also possible that exposure of consumers to media contents which picture organized crime as powerful and terrifying, in the face of which the average citizen has limited defences, may generate sufficient fear in the consumer that he is, if anything, more susceptible to influence and intimidation at the hands of the criminal, and may thus create a sense of strength and reassurance for criminal behaviour on the part of some beginning criminals. At the same time, it is possible that the effect of the police in maintaining law and order in society may be impaired by much of the present contents of the media. The police, although conceptualized as the "good guys", are often depicted as brutal in their behaviour. This is often particularly apparent in news coverage, perhaps because media folk feel they must be especially vigilant for any excesses in the zeal of police. One result of repeated attention to brutality by police has been the development of a rather negative set of attitudes on the part of many toward the police. The breakdown of respect between citizens and the police can easily then become reciprocal. And disrespectful conduct on the part of the police is very likely to breed disrespectful behaviour on the part of citizens, not only for the police, but also for the law they uphold. Moreover, aggressive behaviour depicted in the media on the part of police is perhaps more likely than aggressive behaviour displayed on the part of other citizens to produce imitative aggressive behaviour on the part of media consumers. This effect is likely to be produced precisely because the police, while presented as performing violent acts, are also presented as the "good guys" whose behaviour is not only rewarded in money, but is also thought to be socially sanctioned.

Many *psychological* sources of violence and aggression are recognized which may be facilitated by media presentations. Only a few of these can be mentioned in passing.

*Frustration* is recognized as a major psychological source of aggression (Dollard, et al, 1939). The average media consumer is the average citizen. But the media consumer tends to be presented with a very distorted view of the world

in which he lives. He sees a view of a world in which the average person lives in opulent surroundings, with few worries about money, with a great deal of freedom both to travel and to experience exciting and novel interpersonal relationships, with a good deal of freedom to be violent, and with rich rewards awaiting him. The resulting expectations about what he should have access to in his own life, in contrast to what he is really able to achieve, must leave a real sense of continuing frustration in many media consumers. And the expectations and frustrations arising from this exposure to such media models may well have been a part of what has led to the inflationary psychology of the day. And, no doubt, the necessary reactions of employers to wage demands, add appreciably to the frustrations of the average citizen.

*Fear* is perhaps a lesser-known source of aggressiveness. Fear is a learned motivation which, becoming associated with a drive, tends to add intensity to the drive. Fear of aggression is perhaps the most frequently and intensely taught kind of fear: parents demand submission, prohibit hitting others, and insist upon politeness especially to adults; teachers require inhibition of restlessness and noise, and teach that aggression is the worst in mankind; the media imply that each person is daily in danger of violence, and also at risk of becoming violent. Aggression, then, comes commonly to be feared, which serves also to increase the intensity of any felt aggression. If, then, aggression is aroused from other sources, such as imitation, the aggressive response may be increased in its intensity from the fear it evokes.

*Learning* of aggression may take any of a number of forms, including modelling or imitation as discussed throughout this brief, direct reward or reinforcement as discussed earlier in this section of this appendix, indirect or vicarious reinforcement as discussed in the last section of this appendix, and instrumental learning of a method or procedure violently to achieve a given purpose, such as how to hijack, or how to rob a bank. Learning is the psychological means by which the media may evoke aggressiveness and violence epidemically. Epidemics of protest and demonstration, of hijacking, of extortion by bomb threats, and of economic unrest have often been



traced in effect to periods of increased media coverage of these events, especially in the news. It has been suggested that we may be entering a period of epidemic bombing and terrorism on an international scale, which may be partly attributable to media coverage and the learning deriving therefrom.

At least one more psychological factor in which the media probably play an important role ought to be mentioned. It has been noted in many different situations that submission on the part of a victim tends to increase sadism in violent conduct. This observation has been made in reference to such phenomena as the behaviour of concentration camp guards in World War II toward submissive incarcerates, and the behaviour of rapists toward their intended victims. One of the lessons that is frequently presented implicitly through the media is the message of the helplessness of victims in the face of violence. Stories often imply that citizens are helpless in the face of threats of violence; and newscasts seldom report incidents in which violence was coped with effectively and thus was rendered ineffectual. The message to citizens seems often to be that violence should be submitted to; the equivalent message to one who is learning violence is often that his victim is defenceless and at his mercy. This is a lesson which, once learned, only serves to add fuel to the fires of violence.

Most of the above observations suggest ways in which the effects of violence presented in the media can be reduced or limited. It may be time to carefully think through applications of this intelligence for the media.

## Appendix E

### *Pro-Social Uses of the Media*

The main portion of this brief summarizes evidence that exposure to media violence, in particular on television, leads to increases in aggressive behaviour. This should not be construed, however, as a condemnation of the media as such. We would not wish to ignore the tremendous positive impact that the media can have, and have had, on society. The same principles of modelling and learning which have been shown to have undesirable and anti-social consequences in behaviour can also produce an increase in socially desirable or pro-social behaviours, following exposure to appropriate models.

It would seem reasonable to assume that one reason why the vast amounts of violence portrayed in the media have not had as devastating an effect on society as the evidence suggests they might have had, is that the media have also presented a large amount of pro-social material to be modelled by the consumer. Most, even violent, scripts contain a good deal of conduct which is cooperative, helpful, respectful, polite, and the like as conduct also to be emulated.

This appendix attempts to summarize some of the evidence relating to pro-social effects of exposure to the media. The entertainment values of the media are sufficiently obvious not to require further comment here. The following discussion is divided into three sections, dealing with educational effects, therapeutic effects, and other types of pro-social learnings which the media might facilitate. The presentation is not intended to be anything near an exhaustive one. It seems only proper that one of the greater tasks of media people should be to use their ingenuity always to find new and interesting ways in which to introduce people to pro-social behaviours and ways of living.

#### 1: EDUCATIONAL USES

The media have always been our major educators. The media provide society with its indirect means of communication. Each of the media, with the exception of the visual media, developed first as means for education and communication. It is obvious that, through the media, a wealth of infor-

mation can be made available to any person which he would not otherwise have access to. And much incidental information is conveyed in presentations which are primarily designed as entertainment.

Books have traditionally been the main educational media. There is evidence, however, that each of the media in its own way can serve as important adjuncts to the general educational purpose. Ball and Bogatz (1970), employing a variety of measures such as knowledge of body parts, letters, numbers, form matching, relationships, sorting and classification, showed that, over a six month period, scores related to these skills increased in children in direct proportion to their exposure to *Sesame Street*. Colton (1972) found that audio-visual displays assisted kindergarten children to learn concepts. Whole school curriculum courses have been placed on videotape, and have been used at least as teaching aids. On a more informal basis, vast quantities of information and opinion are dispensed to media consumers through television, radio, newspapers, and magazines.

Unhappily, too little real research has been done on the effectiveness of media uses in education. It is true that educational television stations have been funded and developed. These stations do produce a great deal of educational material for the consumer. However, there is very little evidence that these materials do educate, or that they are in any way superior to other means for education. Indeed, there is very little real evidence that books help people to learn anything. There is some evidence available that educational television channels tend to be consumed somewhat more parsimoniously by consumers than the contents of commercial channels (Schramm, 1960). But this information, while disheartening, is perhaps not particularly informative. It may be that the professional quality of educational television is a bit limited; it may be that the programming of educational television is poor; it may be that commercial television competes successfully because it fills mankind's learned need for violent content; it may be that we just have not yet learned how to use television as an educational medium. The same may also be

true of books, journals, newspapers, and radio, for all we know.

Perhaps it is time that media industry licenses should include the requirement that some defined part of the profits should be devoted to research and to research which is less concerned with the marketability of a product, and more concerned with the effect of the product on the consumer. This requirement should surely be particularly strong for media having an explicit educational purpose. If one of the media is to be supported on the strength of its ostensible educational purposes or effects, it might properly be required, in the service of consumer protection, to show that it, in fact, does have educational effects; that is that it does, in fact, change in some way the behaviours of those exposed to its products. Perhaps, then it might be possible not only to learn something about how best the various media may be used for educational purposes, it might also be possible to learn something about the types of effects the various types of media's various messages have upon the human consumer. Educators, of course, as media or indirect communicators, should not be exempt from the requirement to show both the fact and the types of their effects on their (student) consumers.

## II: THERAPEUTIC USES

Medicine has achieved its major therapeutic accomplishments in the treatment and prevention of infectious disease. The other major group of diseases is the stress-related diseases. These are only now beginning to yield to some forms of psychological treatments, especially the desensitization treatments. Most of these stress diseases are probably preventable with adequate procedures and an appropriate technology. There is now some reason to believe that one appropriate type of technology for some of the stress-related diseases and problems of humans may be the communications media, especially television. Even the very limited studies which have been done up to the present time suggest that considerable benefit might be obtained through an enlightened use of television programs to allow desensitization of anxiety – which is the psychological aspect of stress. In addition to general stress reduction, the media may be useable as means to permit

reduction in several other types of human ills and problems.

*Attitudes and behaviours* which are undesirable or disruptive can sometimes be reduced or altered, according to some studies. An early example is provided in a study by Chittenden (1942). Hyper-aggressive, domineering children were shown a series of puppet shows in which dolls displaying cooperative solutions to conflict were rewarded, while others which displayed aggressive solutions were met with unpleasant consequences. This exposure was followed by a reduction in the undesirable behaviour of the children. Walters and Willows (1968) examined the effects of exposing either aggressive or non-aggressive filmed models to disturbed and non-disturbed seven to ten year-old boys. They found an increase in the non-aggressive imitative behaviour in the non-disturbed boys. It remains a moot question whether disturbed boys and girls might not also be able to benefit from appropriately modelled behaviour under the right circumstances.

*Fearful* or phobic behaviour has been reduced in a number of studies by exposing subjects to fearless models. Bandura, Grusec and Menlove (1967), using live models, and Bandura and Menlove (1968), using filmed models, showed peer models playing fearlessly with dogs to children who were fearful of dogs. After viewing the models, the subjects were more willing to approach and pet dogs. When, in a later study, multiple peer models were used, the effect endured for at least one month. A similar study was carried out by Hill, Liebert and Mott (1968). Another study from Bandura's laboratory (Bandura, Blanchard and Ritter, 1969) dealt with snake phobia. Various treatments were tested and compared, one treatment being a film of a model fearlessly approaching a snake. Although this latter did not prove to be the most effective of the treatments tested, it was effective in increasing subjects' ability to approach snakes, reducing the self-report of fear of snakes, and producing a more positive attitude towards them. Most of these effects endured at least one month. And it should be noted that, although not the most effective treatment method tested, this procedure was

probably the easiest to develop and to use with the largest number of people.

Limited and perhaps unimportant types of phobias are not the only types of anxiety reactions which have been approached in this manner.

Paulos and Davidson (1971) showed a simulated television program to four-and-a-half to six-and-three-quarter year old children who were afraid of dentists. In the film an eight year old boy climbed fearlessly into a dentist's chair as a fearful four-year old girl looked on. The latter's fear was shown slowly to subside, and later in the program she also climbed into the chair. The results showed significant reduction in the fear of the formerly anxious children in that setting.

Meichenbaum (1971) has done a good deal of research showing that subjects can learn to cope with their anxieties in anxiety-provoking situations by learning to make coping types of statements to themselves. This technique can be taught by the use of appropriate modelling, including taped models. Some of the studies done by Quirk (1973, 1974, 1975), using slide depicted materials to treat complex and intractable disorders, may have direct applications in media presentations.

Withdrawn behaviour in nursery school children has been alleviated by the use of filmed models (O'Connor, 1972). A film was made depicting appropriate nursery school behaviour. In each scene an initially withdrawn peer model observes an activity, and then joins in, and then is reinforced. The activities become progressively more vigorous. As a result of exposure to this film, the number of social interactions of withdrawn children increased significantly, as compared with a control group. There is reason to believe that chronic hospitalized psychiatric patients can increase their socially desirable and adjusted behaviour by exposure to appropriately designed films depicting such behaviour (Stoller, 1967). And the range of procedures by which various types of human disabilities and problems may be relieved is increasing steadily.

### III: OTHER PRO-SOCIAL USES

A number of studies have shown an increase in socially desirable behaviours after exposure to live of filmed models. Generosity and altruism have been studied by workers such as Bryan and

Walbeck (1970), and Rosenhan and White (1967). In their studies, children saw a model of the same age and sex play a bowling game, thereby winning cash certificates. The models would either act selfishly with their winnings, or else generously by donations to charity; the models would also preach either selfishness or generosity. When the subjects later played the game themselves, those who saw the charitable model were more likely to share their winnings than those who saw the selfish model, regardless of the nature of the model's statements. That is, only the actual behaviour of the model influenced the subject's behaviour. A similar study by Stein and Bryan (1972) dealt with self-control, again in the context of a bowling game. The peer model was instructed to reward himself by taking a stack of nickels whenever he obtained a high score. For some of the children who served as subjects the model adhered to the rule, and for others he broke it. The models also preached adherence or otherwise to the rule. Subsequently, the rule was obeyed most by subjects whose model consistently practised and preached rule adherence.

Delay of gratification has been studied. Bandura and Mischel (1965) first determined subjects' patterns of reward-seeking – that is, whether the subjects tended to take immediate rewards of less value, or else were willing to delay for a more valuable reward. Then each subject was exposed to a model demonstrating the opposite tendency. This exposure resulted in a significant change in subjects' patterns of delaying rewards. Conformity has been studied in a similar way. In an experiment by Walters, Leat and Mezei (1963) the rule was made that certain toys were not to be touched. Subjects first saw a filmed model break the rule, which was either rewarded or punished. Then they were themselves left in the presence of the forbidden toy. Subjects in the model-rewarded condition played sooner and longer with the toys than those in the model-punished condition. Wolf and Cheyne (1972), in a similar experiment, concluded that a conforming model caused subjects to inhibit play with forbidden toys, whereas a deviant model caused disinhibition. These effects were obtained whether the model was live or symbolic, behavioural or



verbal. The behavioural model, however, was more effective than the verbal one.

Resistance to temptation has been studied. Bryan (1969) showed children an adult model who either refrained from or yielded to temptation to steal candies. As in other experiments, the model either preached restraint or transgression, or made neutral statements. Although the children, later left in the same situation, did not transgress, their judgements about the model's niceness were affected by the model's actions, but the judgements were not affected by the model's preaching. Moral judgement or reasoning was improved in pre-adolescents (Keasey, 1973) and in adolescent delinquents (Prentice, 1972), following exposure to models who illustrated a higher level of reasoning or judgment in response to conflict situations they had themselves done.

One experiment demonstrated that even moderately retarded subjects might be able to learn a limited repertoire of social responses from videotape models. In the study in question (Nelson, et al, 1973) the subject learned three responses. In view of recent policy in television programming of showing non-white actors in positive roles, an experiment by Kraemer, et al (1975) is interesting. These workers found a reduction in racial prejudice in subjects who were shown a film *Black and White: Uptight*, or who were shown a videotape of a model acquiring a positive attitude after seeing the film.

An important field study by Stein and Friedrich (1972) was able to overcome many of the limitations of the other laboratory experiments by observing children in a fairly naturalistic nursery school setting, exposed to regular television programs. Their measures included cooperative behaviour, persistence and self-control, in both classrooms and freeplay situations, over a period of nine weeks. The first three weeks served as a baseline period. For the next four weeks the children were shown on a daily basis either a pro-social program (*Mister Roger's Neighborhood*), aggressive cartoons (*Batman* or *Superman*), or neutral programs. The final two weeks served as a follow-up period. Besides the usual finding that aggression increased in those watching aggressive programs, there was also an increase in self-control in those watching pro-social programs,

and those subjects watching aggressive programs decreased in self-control. Also, among children of lower socio-economic backgrounds, there was noted to be an increase in cooperative behaviour within the group watching the pro-social programs.

The above findings, together with those presented throughout the rest of this brief, provide a basis for the general recommendation that it is of vital importance to society as a whole: that means be found to insure that aggressive media models be replaced by media models who illustrate socially desirable behaviours, and who resolve problem situations in a pro-social manner. There is a host of pro-social actions that people can be taught. And the very considerable creative capabilities of media folk should somehow be turned to the solution of society's many problems instead of contributing to them. The possibilities opening up from the research literature for the valuable application of the creative resources of the media are multiform and intensely intriguing.

## Appendix F

### *Relative Effects of the Several Media in Violence Evocation*

Since nearly all the research literature concerning the effects of the media in evoking violence has studied the audio-visual media, particularly film and television, one question of interest to the Royal Commission will be whether the several other communications media have similar effects on human behaviour. This question has not received sufficient attention, and there is little by way of empirical data by which it could be answered directly. However, an analysis of the issues may provide an approximation to the solution to this question.

First, one might wish to ask the question whether all the media share in their capacity to model or to evoke imitative behaviour, since modelling and imitation have been the main areas of focus of the research literature on the effects of the media. It seems increasingly clear that there is a tendency for the type of behaviour which is modelled to be the type of behaviour learned. Some of the studies quoted earlier showed that verbal behaviour such as "preaching" was somewhat less effective in producing imitation in action than modelling the actions to be imitated (see Appendix E). The type of modelling which is most facilitated in media with video elements is the modelling of actions, gestures, and gross motor behaviours. It is these types of behaviours which are most easily or readily learned through television and motion pictures (Dominick and Greenberg, 1972; Lefkowitz, et al, 1972; McIntyre and Teevan, 1972; McLeod, et al, 1972a, 1972b; Robinson and Bachman, 1972; Stein and Friedrich, 1972; Steuer, et al, 1971). The rest of the media tend to employ verbalizations, written or spoken, as their most obvious means of communication. Consequently, they probably tend to employ verbal modelling. Verbal modelling provides an important part of the learning necessary for daily life, but it may not tend to result in the learning of violence to as great a degree as action modelling. Moreover, there may be some evidence to suggest that verbal modelling may not be quite as effective a means of modelling

with children (Bryan and Walbeck, 1970) as with adults.

Second, television and motion pictures provide the consumer with the kind of information or data which he is most used to employing as a means for verifying or validating information, namely the evidence of the eyes. The eyes scanning a visible situation, especially involving action and colour, creates a demanding impression of reality, even if, as anyone can see for himself by a trip to the Ontario Science Centre to look at the Ames trapezoidal window or distorted room, for example, what is being examined is patently illusory. Verbal statements may or may not be accepted by the consumer as true or valid, depending upon the faith the consumer has in the authority of the speaker. But the witness of the eyes, allowing a number of people independently to "see for themselves", is difficult to discredit, even if repeated disclaimers are made assuring the viewer that what he sees is fictional. This gives television and motion pictures a distinct advantage over the other media in creating a sense of sharing or identification with, and of the reality of their presentations. Interestingly, the more television watched, and the more the television watched is violent, the more likely older children are to believe that the situations depicted are realistic and true to life (Eron, et al, 1972). Moreover, video systems provide, better than most other media, contextual and other subtle cues, such as subtle indications of the model being rewarded, to be represented concurrently with the main action. This may permit vicarious reinforcement to operate better through the video media than through others.

Third, there is a marked difference among the media in the amount of exposure achieved by each. Television and motion pictures are available to virtually all Ontario residents – granting that the data on American families probably applies in this to Ontario families. Television sets are the most common electric appliances in American homes, being more common than indoor plumbing (Liebert, et al, 1973); about 99 per cent of family units with children in the States have television sets and *TV Guide* is one of the two top circulation magazines. American estimates tell us that the average child will spend more time

watching television than in any other form of activity other than sleeping. The average set is on for more than six hours per day. Television appears to have the largest exposure among the several media. It is true that there are definable changes in media use at the various ages of life, but television remains for most ages the most-used of the media. This gives television a greater capacity than the other media to influence people's lives and behaviour.

Fourth, the media differ considerably in terms of the susceptibility of their various consumers. This factor has several parts.

(a) There are major differences in the manner in which people approach the several media. Newspapers tend to be read both at a routine time and in a highly selective way. Both of these factors tend to maintain a fairly high level of resistance on the part of the consumer to the material received, the first creating a sort of orderliness in the approach to the paper, and the second activating perceptual defence and vigilance mechanisms in the service of efficient reading. Radio, these days, is handled by most people as a kind of background noise. Television, motion pictures, and perhaps comic books, however, tend to be consumed rather passively, during free time, and while resting comfortably in relatively relaxed circumstances. Under these conditions, selective and defensive activities tend to be quiescent, and susceptibility to the message optimized, especially if the message is associated with arousing material such as aggressive or sexual content, sufficient to optimize learning (Doob and Climie, 1972; Doob and Kirshenbaum, 1973).

(b) There are differences among the susceptibilities of the various high exposure consumers of the several media. The very young are consumers solely of television. Comic books are added in early school age. Movies and fictional books are added in the early teen years. Magazines tend to replace comic books from mid-adolescence. By the mid-twenties the newspaper is added to the media fare. Television interest declines somewhat in the mid-thirties, to re-emerge with approach to retirement (Murray, 1973). The important observation here is that people at their most susceptible times of life, when they most feel the need for information, assurance, stability, and are most in

a state of unsettled uncertainty, show an increase in their consumption of television. Moreover, during the pre-adolescent years, when the child is most actively learning new patterns of action, when his critical faculties are least developed, when his ability to distinguish between reality and fiction is most weak, when his capacity to evaluate or judge his own and others' behaviour is least formed, and when he is most dependent upon communications to help him with his learnings; he is almost exclusively a consumer, among the media, of television. Moreover, during the first of these years of high susceptibility, there is apt to be limited competition from school and playmates for his television time.

(c) All the media share in their uses of several different means by which they communicate to the consumer the veracity of their messages. The advantage of television and film has already been commented upon in terms of their use of communications modalities which are used most by people as means to verify reality. Newspapers provide a context of apparent veracity by reporting "news" and by relying upon a "descriptive" format of presentation. Magazines and radio rely on authoritative statements and quotations of authorities as their means to create the impression of veracity. It is probably true that different people "believe" what they are presented in the several media. For example, people with authoritarian dispositions may be more susceptible to magazines and radio, while scientists are probably more susceptible to television and film.

On the basis of the above analysis, it would seem likely that the research findings which have mostly tested the effects of television and film on human behaviour have their main relevance to television and film. The other media probably have a somewhat less powerful effect on human behaviour than television and film. However, the size of this difference is not known, and it probably is not too great. The media likely share in their effects on human behaviour in evoking aggression and violence, even if television has an edge over the other media in this effect.

## Appendix G

### *Anecdotal Evidence from Unique Events of Media Violence Affecting Society*

A vast array of anecdotal evidence has appeared in the press which serves to support the direct relationship which frequently exists between media presentations and subsequent violent behaviour of individuals or groups. These stories range from such frequently quoted incidents as that involving the boy who was found by the housekeeper putting ground glass into the family food to see whether it had the effects claimed for it on a television program, to that involving a sudden radical increase in extortion attempts following presentation of a movie involving a bomb threat on a plane. What these stories prove is only that various kinds of incidents give people ideas, and some people are looking around for ideas which may net them profit or widespread recognition.

What these anecdotes do not indicate is that it is not only kooks and other crazy folk who are affected by ideas they encounter in the media. It is true that not everyone runs out to copy an idea of a violent nature which he encounters through the media. But enough people do copy ideas they get from the media that it is risky to believe that it is only those who are looking for some way to act out who copy media ideas. The identified incidents are legion, and many more are obviously there which have not come to public notice. Indeed, it seems likely from the literature that the effects of media violence are usually, even typically, rather more subtle than can be represented fairly in gross single acts of violence. Instead, it seems more likely that most of the anecdotal material which might properly be taken as meaning something has to do with incidents which would not only go unreported, but even unrecognized as relevant to the media experiences of the individuals involved. But such subtle incidents there are by the score, encountered frequently in clinical practice by the clinician who listens and explores far enough.

One individual in his childhood strongly identified with a character in literature who happened to have the same first name as himself,

and the literary character happened to be a relatively violent, if cavalier, individual. The effects on this individual's life were in no single instance sufficiently noteworthy to warrant report, but the effects were such as to produce a general, and the growing (with experience) trend toward increasing levels of swashbuckling aggressiveness. Certainly, there were many other factors which contributed to this individual's aggressiveness, but the exposure to his namesake in literature was definably related to his general level of aggressiveness. Similarly, although not the only factor involved, one of the factors which led a woman to seek to separate from her husband was expressly the rather clear fantasy identification with the woman portrayed in a television series about a divorced lady and her daughters.

However, these incidents and the multitudes like them that might be listed are really relatively worthless as evidences of the destructive effects of media contents. Moreover, the Commission has as wide access to such anecdotes as the Task Force does. It would seem more useful here to consider another aspect of the problem of anecdotal material and its effects on the behaviour of individuals and of society. It is to the pursuit of this other aspect of the problem that this appendix will be devoted.

The other aspect of the problem has to do with the identification of media contents which may be expected to evoke undesirable, especially violent, behavioural consequences. The research literature in the field provides a fairly clear picture of the sorts of variables which are apt to provoke imitation, and thus to evoke undesirable behaviours. And the available anecdotes provide examples of the sorts of things which may relatively easily and directly produce behavioural effects.

What is too often omitted from discussion, largely because of the sensitivities of media folk on the subject, is the sorts of contents, especially in the news, which may evoke violent behaviours. In the following, two news broadcast items are reported, the direct or indirect consequences of which are unknown, but which represent in subtle forms the greatest probable sources of risk that violent consequences might follow.

The first incident was reported on August 5, 1975, on CBC's National news broadcast. The



report concerned an RCMP report which was stated not to have been intended for publication. The RCMP report suggested that the major present threat to the peace in Canada was from the Canadian Indians. The report specifically stated the risk of “kidnapping or worse” of politicians. It also suggested that another target of Indian resentment might be other Indians. The report spoke of the organization Indians were undergoing, and of the stock piling of arms. It even pointed out that the militant Indians would be pleased with the press reportage of the RCMP report in that it would imply to them that the RCMP and the press were now taking them seriously after they had threatened for so long a time. The report was accompanied by film footage including Indians carrying firearms, Indians threatening police, and Indians fighting with RCMP officers during a strong and apparently violent protest. The report referred also to the Quebec crisis of a few years ago (FLQ), and repeated that in that crisis one diplomat was kidnapped and another killed, implying quite clearly that this sort of event might well occur again.

Quite apart from whether or not this news report had any consequences in behaviour of individuals, it was ideally constructed to produce violent consequences. It suggested Canadian Indians as appropriate targets for reactive resentment and violence from the non-Indian population; it offered any Indians or others who might be so inclined the reminder that national, and even international, attention might be achieved quite easily merely by repeating the FLQ acts, and this reminder was repeated in the report to add emphasis; it offered other Indians and politicians as possible targets for violence, and suggested what might be done to them; it suggested the notion of stock-piling of arms, which might have been an interesting suggestion to all sorts of frustrated and fearful people; it offered visual displays of ways in which press coverage and attention might be obtained for a cause; it created the impression that society’s defences against violent protest were ineffectual and perhaps impotent. The whole story was prefixed with a kind of boast by the newscaster, who might be considered to have social status, that the RCMP report was, in effect stolen,

implicitly by the CBC, and was being exposed surreptitiously and perhaps with a dash of boldness and impropriety. This newscast incident represents perhaps the most capricious and destructive kind of media content imaginable.

A related type of report was made, also on August 5, 1975, on CTV’s *Nightbeat News*. The report stated that Dr. Morton Shulman had claimed that a fanatic with six sticks of dynamite could wipe out the City of Toronto in two weeks. Shulman apparently found a way into the Pickering nuclear generating plant through unguarded routes, and made his way into radio-active areas.

It is obvious that this sort of report is sensationalistic, as was the tenor of Shulman’s quoted statement. But it is more. It provides anybody with an idea about how he might do the ultimate damage, to have the ultimate effects he might never have thought himself capable of having, the destruction of a city. And many might have capitalized upon the idea, either out of grudge, or out of bitter resentment, or out of an idea to extort.

It seems time for a major thrust on the part of government and of the citizenry to insure that such thoughtless and potentially destructive contents not be exposed to the mass population through the media. The media, by virtue of the fact that they reach innumerable people under the most influenceable conditions, must surely be subject to the most stringent of controls lest they do society deep and perhaps irreversible damage.

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## The Toronto Board of Education

*I think civilization is definitely going backwards. I think it's obvious in the unbelievable increase in violence, both in reality and in what passes for entertainment. Mankind has been trying to inch his way out of savagery, and more and more we seem to be accepting it again, mutely, with not much protest.*

LORD KENNETH CLARK, HISTORIAN  
AND AUTHOR OF *CIVILISATION*

*Too much violence, too much crime—people are hypnotized by it [television]. They look at it all the time. It is contaminating our society.*

VLADIMIR ZWORYKIN, PHYSICIST  
AND FOUNDER OF TELEVISION

The Toronto Board of Education has often expressed concern regarding the prevalence of programs depicting violence in the media. Accordingly, at its meeting on October 16, 1975, the Board approved the formation of a Committee to submit a brief to The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry. This Committee, composed of trustees, parents, teachers and resource personnel discussed many topics on violence and its related issues. However, for the purposes of this brief, strong concern was expressed regarding the impact and influence of television and motion pictures on the school child. Special consideration was placed on the violent/aggressive behaviour of the elementary school child, vis-à-vis the violent programs in the media.

The Committee is by no means stating or purporting to state that there is a direct cause-effect relationship between violence in the media and all aggressive behaviour. We are aware that many factors lead to excessive violence/aggression, viz.: psychological, emotional, environmental, et cetera. However, from representations made to us, we are certain that violence in the communications media is definitely a contributing factor, albeit not the sole factor, that brings out erratic behaviour in some of our youngsters.

Accordingly, the Committee carefully considered ways and means to decrease the amount of violent programs in the media and to that end is recommending the following:

### (1) *Alternative Programming*

The Committee expressed concern about the frequency and repetition of those programs where excessive violence is portrayed, e.g., police and detective shows. Since this gives the viewer little, if any, choice in selecting alternative programming, the Committee is recommending that more programs with non-violent themes be aired more frequently.

### (2) *Quality Programming*

The programs that are currently screened too often employ violence as a problem-solving device. In representations made to us by teachers and other concerned individuals, it was stressed on several occasions that youngsters were adopting similar behaviour patterns to those on the television programs. Since the quality of the programs tends to be both poor and repetitive, little, if any, opportunity was left for creative thinking. Special attention was focused on the child of impressionistic age, who according to statistics, spends approximately four hours daily watching television.

Special concern was expressed with respect to the depiction of violence in newscasts and in news coverage. It was felt by some members that an excessive amount of violence during news broadcasting gives the individual an impression of a negativistic and violent world.

The Committee is recommending that programs depicting more meaningful themes replace those programs which have little to offer in both quality and content and that, where possible, violence in newscasts be reduced.

### (3) *Violence in Sports*

From the discussions and oral representations made to the Committee, it became clear to us that unnecessary and excessive violence in sports influences children at the elementary school level to display similar behaviour patterns. The Committee is extremely concerned with the focusing-in of television cameras on the unsportsmanlike and unprofessional aggressive conduct of the players. We are aware that players are penalized for unruly behaviour, but we are strongly objecting to such detailed depiction of

this behaviour. Statements like, "Did you see the fight last night?" rather than "Did you see the game last night?" speak for themselves. In addition, publicizing such names as "Mad Dog", "Tiger", "Hammer", et cetera, should be discontinued, at least in the media.

The Committee is, therefore, recommending that greater emphasis be placed on skill and sportsmanlike conduct.

#### (4) *Advertising CRTC Public Hearings*

It was brought to our attention that although the CRTC calls for public input, we feel that not enough publicity is given to these hearings, thereby precluding any possible input from the community. Interested groups such as home and school associations, parent groups, et cetera, could provide valuable information insofar as programs are concerned. In addition, the Committee strongly felt that there should be representation from the education field on the CRTC.

To effect the above, the Committee is recommending that greater publicity for public input to the CRTC be implemented and that a representative from the education field be appointed to the CRTC.

#### (5) *Family Viewing Hour*

Further to Recommendation (1), the Committee feels that certain hours, i.e., between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. daily, should be slotted for special shows suitable for family viewing. Programs depicting violent or aggressive behaviour and other programs not suitable for youngsters should be screened at much later hours. It has been brought to our attention that certain television networks would like to produce quality family programs but cannot without subsidization. The competition of the major networks is simply too great.

Thus, the Committee is recommending that both levels of government, the federal and provincial, provide subsidies to networks to produce acceptable alternative programs.

#### (6) *The Image of Women in the Media*

The Committee expressed concern about the role and image of women in the media. Although it is not directly related to violence per se, grave objec-

tions were raised that women tend to be viewed both as persons of secondary status and that of sex objects. Other members of the Committee expressed dissatisfaction with the image of women portrayed in movie advertisements, especially those where aggression and/or violence is depicted.

It is recommended, therefore, that producers of movies, television programs and advertisers be encouraged to promote a positive image of women.

What the Committee has attempted to do in this brief is to appeal to the proper authorities to try to reduce the number of television programs depicting violent or aggressive behaviour in the media. The Committee is certain that The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry will take into consideration our recommendations and the Committee is optimistic that the appropriate action will be taken where necessary.

*Alexander Chumak, Chairman*

*Dennis J. Colby,*

*Roy W. Johnston,*

*Bob Orr,*

*Work Group on Violence in the Communications Industry.*



## Mid-Canada Broadcasting

If our television industry wishes to remain viable and potent in its role as a major social institution, it needs to continue to be flexible and relate to new conditions of our social and economic environments. We have always sought to relate to our local system. We challenge our viewers, by showing the constructive and destructive elements of our society, and by demonstrating how institutions work together and against each other. We believe that free access to all types of information ultimately achieves a better quality of life for all of us.

It is impossible to believe that any of us completely understand the entire society and how business inter-relates to it in every instance, but experience shows that most people know the extremes of our check and balance system.

With a local television system, one of our most critical priorities is community feedback. Our managers involve themselves in community responsibilities.

Besides the expected and obvious roles of our staff in activities ranging from the Chamber of Commerce to the Theatre Centre, we encourage all of our staff to become active in overall community service organizations. We feel that media managers, who are actually involved at the grass root level, are able to maintain a far better contact with the community in which we live than if we were to isolate ourselves from the activities of the community as a whole. Interaction is a method of us achieving a rapport and a continuing understanding of our community. The old ostrich complex most certainly cannot apply to today's broadcasting media. We must seek out a problem-solving approach to our society rather than expect a problem-free society.

The problem at hand today of course is the degeneration of our society. We take the role that we play most seriously, and of course the paradoxes and complex relationships that we are all dealing with now, all attempt to answer the question of how does society affect business and how does our business affect society. Our desire, of course, is to live with each other so that the potential benefits of each may be received.

Modern society has presented us with an

immensely complicated problem that it did not have formerly. In the past, decisions were often clearcut. In the past, if economic conditions degenerated, business would lay people off and this would be understood to be "in the public interest" because of its favourable effect on costs and prices according to the invisible hand of economic competition. In the past, matters of social concern might be met with the sarcasm of Charles Dickens's "Bah! Humbug!".

Since the television business so regularly interacts with all of society, we are living in more of a glass cage than any other company on earth. Almost every activity of our business is brought into every living-room or recreation room in Northern Ontario. We always have to balance this social broadcasting mission with an economic one, but a shifting of the balance in either direction can create a disequilibrium that will destroy our overall business and community service.

We believe that there are many reasons for this new social conscience that the public seems to have developed over recent years. One of the fundamental ones of course is that society in general has solved most of its economic problems arising from the depression of the 1930s, so it is now ready to move on to new ground. I believe, however, that television has helped make these problems and challenges to social issues very, very visible and, in effect, some of our viewers have chosen to adopt the old Greek philosophy of "shoot the messenger". Problems such as: crime in our society, urban decay, disadvantaged people, ecological problems and equality of opportunity have all been clearly demonstrated by the television media. The demands of our society made on business are part of a larger series of changes occurring throughout our entire social system. Many difficult problems are arising because of incredibly rapid social changes; this, of course, is upsetting the delicate equilibrium in this complex society. Most certainly the broadcasting industry is concerned about the role it is playing in keeping our society on the rails or the role it might be playing in increasing friction among various elements of our society.

Peter Drucker in his "*Age of Discontinuity . . . Guidelines to our Changing Society*" lists four discontinuities that are altering our entire system.

Significantly enough, he lists the first one as technological innovation such as the computer and television, which are having major effects not only on business but on the whole society. The other elements include the development of a world economy of one market, a pluralistic social system in which social tasks are mostly vested to large institutions and, of course, the overall effect of the knowledge revolution.

Here in Northern Ontario, Mid-Canada Television does have a very real feeling of social responsibility and social conscience. Our president, J. Conrad Lavigne, is a self-made man and has risen from the backrooms of a butcher shop to the president of our company. As both an active broadcaster and a father of six children, he himself is one of the driving forces behind Mid-Canada Television's excellent reputation for being one of the most responsible broadcasters in Canada. All of our management staff throughout the major centres of Northern Ontario are vitally integrated with the community at large, and we are most concerned about the overall welfare of our communities, since they ultimately will be responsible for the continuation of our own interests in business. We live here. Our constant desire is to have the net effect of enhancing the quality of life in Northern Ontario in the broadest possible way, however, the quality of life is defined by society; there is no unanimous definition of right and wrong anymore and somehow we attempt to achieve a relative harmony between business actions and society's general wants as we perceive them. We must act in a manner that will accomplish social benefit along with the traditional economic goals that our firm must obtain. So far in our company's history, we have achieved the social benefits rather well, but unfortunately, in the wide-spread broadcasting market of Northern Ontario, our largest failure has been to become satisfactorily profitable.

Our president, through his very close contact with this Northern community, has become so concerned with our social outputs that in the past we have often lost track of our economic outputs. We presently program ten television transmitters and cover from the shores of James Bay in the North extending four hundred miles to Parry Sound in the South. In the West, we supply

programming to the community of Hearst and extend our coverage area 340 miles to the East past Mattawa. This is a massive piece of Canadian Shield and the national agencies sometimes wonder if the moose do not outnumber our human population in many of these areas.

You can see that our social struggle to date has been one of making available a free, off-air signal to our population. This has been a costly and continually uneconomic drain on the limited resources generated in the major centres of Sudbury, Timmins and North Bay. To put all this in perspective, in order to achieve a potential audience of almost 550,000 people, we require ten television stations plus the maintenance of over 1,000 miles of microwave, in order to link together our various transmitters in the communities located throughout the Mid-Canada broadcast area. In addition, of course, we program locally in the three major centres. Television locally is an expensive proposition and one that we are vitally concerned with.

We have tended to be an exception to the traditional business decision-making system and we have tended to make our decisions based on considerations for the welfare of supplying a primary service to these outlying and isolated communities.

The question that we pose to this Commission today of course is the difficulty of perhaps some higher authority deciding that certain elements of information or dramatization should not be made available to specific elements of our society. Private broadcasting has a tremendous advantage to offer the community at large and that is to have people responsible for the business in both ownership and management capacity living in and around the community that contributes to its day-to-day existence. The public can sanction the private broadcaster by choosing to ignore his station because of some dislike of the overall operation of the business. This can influence the various merchants who voluntarily choose to advertise on the local station. Basically, therefore, the local merchants and community are able to very quickly influence the broadcaster to change policy that the community as a whole looks upon with disfavour. Broadcasters, of course, are most influential in responding to improve the quality of

community life. Broadcasters play active roles in campaigning for projects from massive urban renewal undertakings right through the charitable supports through telethon, commercial messages, and related activities. This argument is a concept of long-run profit maximization and it is important to the local broadcaster that his community will be a good place to live and do business in. If crime were to decrease, then less tax money would have to be spent to protect and replace property. The argument can be extended in all directions to show that a better society produces a better environment for the broadcasting business as a whole.

Here in Northern Ontario, the demand for cable television has finally resulted in the granting of a licence to a cable operator who will be bringing foreign signals via microwave from Southern Ontario this fall. Today as we sit here, Timmins and Sudbury are being wired and by October thousands of television viewers will be paying \$8.00 per month, for only one reason, more American television. The constant question that I'm faced with on the street by interested citizens in Northern Ontario of course is "How many American stations will we be able to receive?" Five or six years ago a petition in Sudbury collected over 25,000 names demanding cable television and all this simply to get more access to more American programming than they were presently getting.

Without question, the largest number of complaints directed at our network this fall was our failure to air the early NFL football games. The threats of course range from "Wait until we get cable television." right through to "Who do you people think you are, trying to keep the best football in the world away from us?"

The point I am trying to make, however, is that this sort of decision is a relatively simple business decision to make. On the other hand, the paradox we face every day is the question "For television to be truly socially responsible should we not act and react to the desires of the majority of society in a democratic fashion?" By that I mean should we appeal to those people who choose freely to faithfully watch a program that they personally find worthwhile and a program to which they wish to devote a portion of their often valuable time?

Now, we contrast that with the pressures on the broadcasters that certain programs because of their violent or antisocial nature should not be made available to our citizens.

In a two-station market such as Northern Ontario, Canadian programming and programming that perhaps you and I might call socially responsible programming sometimes does well. We note in the last BBM triumph on our station of *Marketplace* over *The Bob Newhart Show* and *Beachcombers* over American movies.

Unfortunately, we do not expect this trend to continue for much longer. When the American networks flood into Canada with their tremendous choices of rather exciting popular programming, the normal trend is to erode the Canadian broadcasting base of programming, while leaving the dedicated viewers of *Bob Newhart* to continue watching happily their show; viewers who might have chosen to watch *Marketplace* would be most tempted by the alternative excitement of more American material. What I am attempting to make extremely clear to you is that the television industry must have an audience in order to, not only justify its existence to be on the air, but in order to economically continue its service.

The rhetorical question of course is "Is it not in the public interest to give the public what it is both interested in and what it wants as an overwhelming majority?" Television is the most powerful and dominant mass tool of media man has ever devised. Some of our viewers believe we have excessive sports; some that we have excessive re-runs; some that we have too much CBC drama and highbrow material, and some general complaints and requests on our lack of having certain American or British shows that people have seen on their holidays or have heard about or read about from the Toronto papers. The number of complaints we have received concerning violence or immoral acts has been extremely minimal and overall – complaints concerned with a very few minutes of dialogue or action that might be broadcast during our 6,500 hours a year of broadcasting.

Public attitudes are only one criterion for formulating social policy, but in a democratic society public attitudes tend to dominate in the long run, so we believe our business must respond



to these expectations in some effective way. For example, during the time that CITY-TV in Toronto was running their Baby Blue Movies, we did have a fair demand from our population who became aware of this project. We refused to move into this sort of programming.

Our president J. Conrad Lavigne, has a weekly television show entitled *President's Corner* and during this half-hour period he reads any, and all letters from the viewers, be they critical or complimentary and responds with thoughtful and courteous comment on all of the suggestions. We do respond to the public. Their demands and desires are constantly weighed against the measured audiences and trends both nationwide and in the local broadcasting market.

For example, in my earlier reference to the theory behind us removing the NFL football from our program schedule, I think it must be admitted that our first impulse was to remove the lowest-rated foreign program in our program schedule in order to accommodate additional Canadian material and that program, of course, was *Sesame Street*. Now the public response from the mothers of Northern Ontario was obviously one of total outrage and we met with incredible social pressure. *Sesame Street* was very quickly replaced and the next lowest-rated program, namely NFL football, was removed. The irony, of course, is that the foreign content nature of a program such as *Sesame Street* is treated in exactly the same regulatory way as the foreign nature of *Police Story* or *Cannon*. On the bottom line of Canadian and foreign content, an hour of *Sesame Street* is counted exactly the same as an hour of any other American or foreign-produced program.

Television broadcasters are most certainly prepared to responsibly program their station and to responsibly report to their audiences and their community at large. We do censor our station's policy within the bounds of excesses and extremes as we see them. We know that we will never be in total agreement with 100 per cent of our society and for that reason, one of our major reference books is the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement. We temper this with our long-term desires to see our society grow and prosper in a moral and responsible way. Benjamin Selekman in his book *Power and Morality in a Business Society* states

that "not until businessmen recognize that they are the administrators of power systems can they face realistically the task of how to discharge morally the power they wield." This age-old problem of power with its dangers as well as its beneficial aspects is one that we do not take lightly. We are certainly concerned with the impact of our programming on our society and the individuals that make it up. We must constantly reconcile the economic difficulties of delivering audiences and satisfying these audiences with the moral balances of directing our society in a manner that is truly socially responsible.

We believe that the broadcasting business, more than any other business, is remarkably quick to respond to social changes. Programming that networks have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in developing have been cancelled after two or three episodes when it was discovered that the audiences did not like the programs that were being aired. Generally, broadcasting has responded far faster to our social changes than have the educational institutions, the governments, the churches or the judiciary.

I referred earlier to the costs to our company of accommodating the Northern desires of receiving the primary CBC network service. This accommodation of supplying new technology has required expensive expansion, and has subsequently reduced our company's profitability to an extremely marginal position. But we also believe that, over the long term, failure to accommodate these desires would be even more costly because our significance as an institution would decline as a result of our inability to meet human expectations.

The broadcasting industry is always transmitting values to society as well as receiving values from society. In fact, we believe that if we are to be a viable, vigorous institution in society, we must initiate a share of forces rather than merely adjusting to outside forces. Every broadcaster needs a drive and a spirit; we play the role of a positive actor on society's stage rather than merely a reactor or reflector.

For example, Mid-Canada Television, to the best of our knowledge, is the only private commercial television network in the world that has initiated a university area to work toward their



Bachelor of Arts or General Science Degree in their own home. Our staff have spent countless months working with people from Laurentian University to develop, produce and plan the methodology of these courses. This year, over 1200 students enrolled in Laurentian Television courses through our system and each student paid their normal \$125 fee per course. Several interesting aspects come out of this sort of activity. First of all, television viewers for the first time are able to react with the people who are speaking to them. They are truly participating by taking notes, writing essays, exams and communicating their difficulties and problems to the professors at the University. They are truly learning the information that television is delivering to them, by carefully concentrating on the material being delivered and reading and using the resource material supplied to them in order to truly understand the subjects being delivered. To most of these individuals there is no alternative to this sort of education. The economics of physically bringing qualified professors to the small towns from Moonbeam to Malartic are totally out of the question. Yet through our television station and through our production and distribution resources we are able to work with an established institution in achieving something that major networks have been unable or reluctant to do.

The additional benefit, of course, is to the viewing audience as a whole. For example, in the last BBM, a university course entitled *World Living Religions*, which had a student enrolment of approximately 450, showed a viewing audience of over 16,000 at 8:30 on Sunday morning. The concept of Northernized programming production has worthwhile merits and, combined with educational funding, we are able to co-produce programs of excellent public interest.

We have attempted to simply make the interface with our viewing audience more active and one thing that has always bothered us is the rather passive nature of television talking to the viewer, hour after hour, as the viewer hypnotically sits in his living room chair and absorbs or partially absorbs the material being supplied to him. The concept of stimulating the viewer to be an active participant in the television process, rather than being a passive recipient, we believe to

be a very important long-term goal of broadcasting.

The broadcasting interface with the public is highly visible. The difficulty, of course, is if this business wishes to remain viable in the long run, it must respond to society's needs and give society what it wants.

When our station came on the air some four years ago, we decided to provide an alternative viewing choice to the residents of Northern Ontario and hit upon the idea of running a six o'clock movie as a true choice to the viewer for the somewhat repetitive evening programming. I'm sure that all of you would appreciate from a scan of your daily newspaper current movie-theatre offerings, very few of your movie houses this week, would be offering movies suitable for six o'clock television presentation. At the same time, obviously, these moviegoers are putting their money where their mouth is and obviously attending these films. We appreciate that unlike the cinema, television enters into everyone's home, but at the same time, the problem exists that trends throughout our society are forcing the television stations to give the viewer and the moviegoer the sort of entertainment that he wants.

We are presently enforcing an internal principle that programs of questionable moral value and programming containing violence necessary to the movie plot should be run at later evening hours. Unfortunately, we are discovering that a surprisingly large number of very young children are still in front of the television set even at late hours of the day and are receiving little or no parental supervision even during these time periods.

We have protected the daytime and early evening time periods for programming that is generally suitable for a wide cross-section of viewing audiences, but at the same time we do feel that we owe responsibilities.

I think a little bit of basic understanding of the problem at hand can be gleaned from Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. He proposed that the priority is such that, as the basic needs are relatively satisfied, other needs move in to dominate human expectations. In the Maslow hierarchy, the basic physical and security needs are followed by social needs.

If we can assume that the physical and security

needs have been relatively satisfied in advanced nations, and there is ample evidence to support this conclusion, then it would follow that the social needs will tend gradually to dominate public expectations. This argument, therefore, would suggest the changes in public expectations are fundamental, far-reaching and significant. Since, of course, all people do not uniformly move along the hierarchy of needs, there will be major differences of opinion about social responsibility. Public expectations are changing rapidly; the ecological issues, racial unrest, and similar social issues are evidence of the change of expectations of the public.

It is not felt that Canadian television stations in general, and specifically Northern Ontario television stations, present a significant number of violent elements of programming in their schedules. First of all, of course, 60 per cent of the schedule must be Canadian and very few Canadian shows contain violence. Of the remaining 40 per cent there is still a large percentage of programs that are classified as light entertainment. We do believe and we do subscribe to the ethical philosophy of warning the viewer should the following program be offensive to some tastes and, in general, some detective or mystery series are known by the viewer to be rougher than what might be available on the competing channel.

We must, however, pass on to you our extreme concern both from that of a local television broadcaster and from that of citizens in Northern Ontario that the American channels do not have any responsibility to this community and their signals brought from Buffalo, which is over 400 miles to the south, are not created, programmed or meant to be delivered into television markets such as this. Obviously, they are not complaining about the additional free audiences being delivered to their channels, but at the same time the programming available on these channels and being demanded by the citizens of Northern Ontario, is certainly in no way planned to be responsible to the social needs of the community at large.

The only incentive given to the Canadian television stations is to purchase exactly the same programming that the American stations are

running and run the Canadian version of this American show at exactly the same time in order to have cable substitution. As you are all well aware, the American daylight saving difficulties moved American programs an hour earlier into Canada during some time periods and in some time zones out west the problems were compounded again. We are, therefore, as local Northern Ontario broadcasters, faced with a very real problem. Since the public interest is difficult to resolve, we, like all of you, are constantly caught between what we believe to be truly responsible and the influence of a few prudish dissidents in the community. On the other hand, economic profit cannot be rationalized out of our system. We believe that the system balance concept implies that there is a need for economic profit along with social benefits – in a sense social profits – for those affected by the business.

We fully appreciate that both social and economic outputs must be greater than inputs in a manner which reasonably serves the citizens of Northern Ontario, that are the claimants on our business. We constantly strive to assure a reasonable saturation of our market area so the citizens are informed and have a chance to develop their potential. We maintain an open system of free speech, but at the same time we work to assure that the most outspoken groups do not dominate, because this becomes a restriction of the openness of the system. Irresponsible abuse of free communication would threaten the foundation on which a free society is built. The consumer, however, controls television communication, as I discussed earlier; the public is the ultimate judge and jury of the broadcasting system. If the public does not wish to watch a show, then the public votes the show out of existence. If a television producer cannot find an advertiser to support a specific program which he desires to produce, he may have to give up his project regardless of how worthy he thinks it is. We believe that if the Government of Ontario wishes to stimulate forms of public broadcasting in light of the cancellation of the recent educational network throughout the north, that it should make use of the existing networks of private stations to distribute programming on an experimental basis that the government feels

might contribute more to the educational, social and cultural well-being of our Northern residents. We have advised Mr. Ran Ide, chairman of OECA of our desires to work with OECA in obtaining programming in all time periods of the broadcast day that would be placed on stations of the OECA network for the next five or ten years until the funding and construction is completed for their Northern system.

The purpose of this discussion of control is to show to you that although we own the communications assets, we are only one of the many influences of the content of mass communication. The normal operation of a pluralistic society is one in which many semi-autonomous groups are influencing the quality and content of communication. Pluralism helps the system to be kept free of monopoly and open to different points of view. In this matter, it helps achieve the free society which is the ultimate objective of free and responsible mass communication. We have the difficult job of maintaining balanced programming that appeals to and alienates the minimum number of the many interest groups. If any one group attains excessive power, social disequilibrium develops.

The idea of self-regulation does work!

The public image of the broadcaster is crucial to his short and long-term profitability. Suitable public behaviour is necessary for the attraction of customers and better employees. Social goals are now a top priority with members of the public; thus the firm that wishes to capture a favourable public image will have to support responsible social goals.

Broadcasters are also realistic enough to understand that irresponsible behaviour will attract additional government regulation. Regulation is costly to business and restricts its flexibility of decision-making. From our broadcasters' point of view, it is crucial to retain freedom in decision-making so that we can maintain the initiative in meeting market and social forces. We also believe that decentralization of power as much as possible is most important to our democratic system. The government is already a massive institution whose centralized power and bureaucracy threaten the balance of power in our system. Any action by our broadcasting industry which would encourage further growth of government could well be a

disservice to the public and possibly erode public freedoms. We would suggest that decision-making should be kept as near as possible to the point where operating problems occur.

The major concern of this Commission is of course to determine the relationship between violence in the communications industry and violence on our streets. Therefore, in preparation for this presentation, I interviewed members of the police force at almost all levels of responsibilities and members of all three municipal, provincial and RCMP forces. They were almost unanimous in their concerns regarding the increase in crime in our society, but the general conclusions of these discussions are somewhat interesting. For example, it was generally agreed that television most certainly contributed to criminal activity by publicizing events that would stimulate a copy of criminal activities. Excellent examples of these are the situations with airline hijackings and with specifically unusual methods of robberies and assaults. On the other hand, they appreciate the difficulty of censoring the news to exclude any items of criminal activities that are new or unusual. Police forces have generally appreciated that the local news media in particular have made no attempt to glorify such criminal activity in any regard.

The police, however, seem to feel a number one concern for the consistent enforcement of the laws of our country. The criminal element has discovered that multi-offenses of the same crimes such as break-and-enter or assault often result in concurrent sentencing. This situation of concurrent sentences, as a general rule combined with the incredible inconsistency with judicial decisions in our courts, certainly contributed to an increase in crime in our society.

This is not meant to detract from the seriousness of the television impact on the viewer. There is absolutely no doubt in our minds that television is and will continue to be the most powerful mass media influencer of human behaviour known to man. We accept this responsibility and attempt to use it with great care. However, it is admitted that television drama programming, with specific reference to American drama productions, most certainly does not portray the average lifestyle or perhaps a realistic



approach to life in general. A valid comment was made by one of the police chiefs that I interviewed that he was somewhat concerned by the volume of reckless driving shown in some of these programs and would suggest that this area might be played down more considerably. As our discussion continued, however, he quickly jumped back into the stance that he would much prefer things the way they are than to have television adopt a full realistic approach to actual criminal cases.

Specifically, should television adopt the programming philosophy to reflect true criminal activity, the first thing that would have to be shown to the viewer would be the lack of efficiency of the police forces coupled with their frustrations in attempting to discover and convict the criminal.

All of a sudden, we would discover that 80 per cent of crimes are never solved and that the criminals either continue on their life of crime or they settle back with their winnings and drop back into legitimate society. Therefore, there most certainly is a danger in making television programming too close to real life, since in real life the criminal gets a far better break than he does on television.

I cannot, however, emphasize enough that our law enforcement agencies and indeed our citizens at large are getting a very, very good shake from the plots of these detective and drama-type programs. Justice seems to prevail almost without exception, and if anything is going to discourage the committing of a crime, it has to be that the person responsible will be caught, convicted, and punished. Most certainly, children are becoming more cynical at an early age. In effect, they are growing up more quickly. Our study proved conclusively that the children fully recognize the cartoons as totally fictional and the violent acts contained therein as being strictly for entertainment and fun.

There is, however, no doubt in our minds that American programming brings with it a fair amount of cultural conflict that includes many other social problems that attack Canadian nationalism as well as Canadian morals. The suggestion given the Commission concerning an additional ten or 20 per cent tax incentive for advertising on Canadian-produced programming

or programming of a family nature seems like an extremely intelligent and positive step toward motivating advertisers to accept the the lower ratings these shows might be bringing, but at the same time decrease their delivered cost for audience.

There is also no doubt that American shows generally have more audience appeal than do weekly Canadian shows. They have so much appeal that within a year over 20,000 Northern television-set owners will be paying almost \$100 per year for one single reason: *more American programs*.

These television programs are being brought into Northern Ontario at a cost of almost \$100,000 a month and simply drive our stations to compete with the American channel or else be driven out of business.

We take our broadcasting job seriously and we program carefully to appeal to a wide variety of Northern Ontario viewing tastes. We seek to respond to social needs far beyond the minimum requirements of the law. We most certainly admit the difficulties in judging what are generally acceptable community standards, but at the same time, we feel that no better system of broadcast control and regulation is yet known.



## Mary Lassance Parthun Cobourg

### Introduction

Art, and its vulgar relation entertainment, is based on conflict. In art of a high level, quality is often judged by the complexity and subtlety of conflict and its exposition. However, as there is a limited audience for the work of Henry James, conflict is quite direct in the mass entertainment media, whether it is in the juxtaposition of stock comic figures or in the struggles of the protagonist against a menacing environment. Conflict and its attendant suspense and action provide the stimulation and release from self that makes entertainment appealing.

The more cultivated person tends to prefer intellectual stimulation of a more subtle nature. The greater proportion of the population, however, prefers a strong emotional impact, whether through sentiment, or through action. Although there are those who disagree, much of this is not so much a matter of morality as one of taste, the mode of which is subject to fashion and changing times.

The requirement for "action" in mass entertainment is not new, but the sheer volume of entertainment is. Because so few occupations or life styles offer credible settings for fast-moving, cliff-hanging plots, we are inundated with police, private-eyes and physicians. This is not so much a matter of deliberate intent as a result of the demands for entertainment and could only be controlled by limiting broadcast hours and media output in general.

### Historical Review

In simpler times and societies, aesthetic and entertainment needs were satisfied by stories told, acted, or danced by members of the society, recounting hunts and battles, a process which also enhanced the morale and solidarity of the group. As society became more complex, entertainment became a specialized function, performed by individuals or troupes whose marginal position permitted them to see society as a whole. Jesters, actors and minstrels not only had to reflect their society, but it was necessary to appeal to diver-

sified tastes as their audiences included all levels of society.

However, society became increasingly differentiated, and, as various sub-groups became more isolated, recreation became more specialized. Integrated artistic and serious works became the sole province of the cultivated and intellectual; the middle classes developed an increased taste for the flowery and sentimental, and the lower classes, of limited means and education, depended upon tabloids and cheaply produced magazines and shows, which emphasize banal emotions and sensationalism usually capped by a heavy-handed morality.

At the present time these distinctions are breaking down as our society becomes increasingly sophisticated and democratic. Art is becoming less elitist and higher levels of literacy and opportunity are available to lower-class individuals. The dignity of the life of the poor, surviving in often brutal surroundings, is expressed by individuals who are a part of such a life, in art forms which are respected by an ever-widening audience.

With this new artistic freedom, however, has come a relaxation of standards in society as a whole, with a corresponding testing of boundaries and revelling in new experiences, including sexuality and violence. There are two groups in society, from each extreme of the social and economic spectrum, many of whose members suffer from erratic socialization, the very rich and the very poor. Such persons tend to exhibit in their own cultural mode patterns of behaviour clinically described as psychopathic or sociopathic.

In the modern world, large-scale migrations, wars, increased technology and population growth have tended to increase the numbers of unsocialized and dispossessed. On the more privileged end of the scale, increased affluence and mobility have increased the number of aimless affluent. The tastes of the two groups, which stem from their mutually exploitative relationship, tend to the decadent and depraved. Today their numbers are sufficiently large to have an impact on the entertainment world.

In this process, the media have played an indirect role by disseminating information and glamorizing this group to a wider audience.

Whereas formerly, depravity was the province of a marginal underworld and decadence was the rarified realm of a literary and aristocratic few, it has become a fad capitalized upon particularly in popular music and in films.

Entrepreneurs are feeding this new market for sensationalism, aided by improved technical effects and the relatively inexpensive production costs. There is nothing new in this situation. It is merely reaching a broader audience in a somewhat classier format, permitting a larger number of people to go "slumming". In turn, because of the competition from straight exploitation films, for example, serious producers and artists may feel compelled to increase sensationalism in their own work in order to get their message across.

This whole process is especially painful to those whose entertainment had been more sheltered and who have identified both good taste and morality with the "up-beat" and edifying. A world which they formerly were barely aware of is suddenly impinging on them and they find it deeply shocking. Accordingly, when they see a police drama about strange murders being carried out and, subsequently, read that the crime had been in real life similarly carried out, they are ready to conclude a direct cause-effect relationship, without realizing that marginal individuals have unceasingly had access to vivid, pictorial descriptions of hideous crimes. Moreover, the response of such individuals is based on their particular physical, psychological and social experience, and their violence may be triggered as easily by a romantic adventure or by a serious and non-exploitative work.

### **Aesthetics of Violence**

Although violence is at best considered a necessary evil, there is the fact of what is sometimes called, "the terrible beauty of violence". The basic primal majesty of violence is integral to great tragedy and heroic epics. Even edifying and spiritual writing tends to use violent metaphors in speaking of "battles with the will", "wrestling with Satan", and are fraught with images of vanquishing, overcoming and sundering.

Violence has always been a subject matter of serious art because of its colour and raw passion, but at certain periods, usually of social change and transition, it has dominated artistic themes. Often one notes a mixture of eroticism and death, which like the life styles and social forms it reflects, slips into decadence until society is reorganized and art becomes revitalized.

Although some artists, such as Bacon or Woods, are concerned with the form and colour of brutal images, violence can also be portrayed in serious art in the service of exploring moral themes. An example is Goya's portrayal of the atrocities of the Napoleonic invasion of Spain. A considerable number of modern serious movies, paintings and songs portraying violence are in this category and are a statement against brutality to a complacent or unaware society.

The current freedom to portray accepted attitudes to their logical extremes has also helped facilitate re-examination of these attitudes. For example, our society has long held a frivolous attitude toward rape and a suspicious attitude toward the victim. Insouciant filmmakers who reflect these attitudes by portraying brutal rape as a neutral or positive phenomenon tend to mobilize public opinion toward changing attitudes and laws concerning rape. The tendency to romanticize war and extreme poverty and casual acceptance of racism are other casualties of greater realism in artistic endeavours, as well as in journalism.

### **Violence as Spectacle**

In primitive, classic and medieval societies, a constant feature has been the provision of public torments of humans and animals. Such activities have undergone various modifications in modern times but still exist in modified forms. Captives and, as society became more complex, criminals, slaves and political minorities were subjected to cruel and imaginative tortures for public entertainment. It is apparent that such activities increase in times of social unrest and turmoil and can be used as a safety valve against aggression within the group and as a source of social cohesion. This function has long been manipulated by political leaders.

The circuses of ancient Rome, the auto-da-fé and later pogroms of Christian Europe, the Nazi genocide, all are classic examples of social mobilization, cohesion, and containment of unrest by violence directed at a vulnerable minority. This phenomenon has not escaped the attention of grass-roots reformers and revolutionaries who try to consolidate this frustration and channel it toward the existing social system. In modern times, the combination of this ancient process with modern technology and political systems had led to large-scale political terror.

Institutionalized torment of animals is widespread and while the pattern is the same, the ingredients vary according to class, culture and period. Bull and bear baiting have passed out of favour but hare coursing, cock-fights and similar spectacles survive in isolated pockets. Man pitted against animal, such as in bull fights and rodeos, are still popular in certain rural cultures and are accompanied by much ritual and pageantry.

Men may be pitted against other men in violent conflict for entertainment purposes. In the past, the men involved were characteristically slaves or prisoners but in present times, in such sports as boxing and hockey, members are recruited from socio-economic minorities who lack other opportunities and are willing to accept the dangers in the hope of fame, money and the promise of upward social mobility.

The idea that entertainment should be free of violence is a relatively new one, as is the idea that children require separate entertainment. These seem to be largely middle-class ideas which originated with the edifying tales of the Victorians and, shedding some of its morbidity, became even more saccharine as it mixed with North American optimism, reaching its zenith in the unreal world of Disney. Unlike the cautionary tales of Dylan Thomas's youth, where little boys who "would skate on Farmer Giles' pond, and did, and drowned", little Disney adventurers disregard parental admonitions and tame wild animals, are pursued by hunting parties and investigate crime, relentlessly stalking desperate criminals. Whereas in reality, children alone who engaged in such adventures would probably be dismembered, shot or sexually violated; this distasteful truth is considered best ignored.

Part and parcel of this recent philosophy of entertainment is a romantic ideal of rural or small-town life, preferably in the past, which would do credit to Marie Antoinette or Rousseau. Thus, modern children, most of whom are urban and are suffering the slings and arrows of the real world and the vagaries and inconsistencies of real parents and teachers, are taught to long for an unreal world out of their time and place. This is a world teaches them no appropriate coping skills, presents no relevant role models, and gives them neither cathexis nor catharsis for their real feelings, but rather encourages vicarious, dreamy satisfactions and fosters a specious nostalgia.

Against this philosophy of specialized childrens' entertainment held by a large core group of our society are many entrepreneurs in entertainment who have a very shrewd grasp of the violence inherent in human nature and know that, as the late Lenny Bruce once said, "People will pay money to see babies get run over by cars." They are a rapacious and unattractive bunch, but the demand for their product is spawned in part by the vacuumness of children's entertainment.

In this polarization, one is faced with being on the side of the angels or against; a most uncomfortable position because the champions have little for the mind and the villains little for the spirit. It seems to me there is a respectable third position in all this, which I would like to espouse.

Public concern about violence is certainly socially positive and encouraging. It would be unfortunate, however, if we were to degrade it by seeking overly simple or harmful solutions. It is crucial to remember that art and entertainment are a reflection of the times, more than moulders of it.

Statistics notwithstanding, much increase in crime is more apparent than real and reflects higher social expectations and a greater equalization within our society. The isolated life of rural communities in North America gave tremendous scope for violent behavior and almost no redress for the weak. Minorities, such as Blacks and Indians could be subjected to violence, including brutal rape and murder, which was committed with impunity, often by the authorities themselves. Authoritarian family structures and the value placed on family autonomy permitted tremendous



violence to parents with their children and to husbands with their wives. Injuries and deaths were rarely investigated.

The urban milieu offers more recourse to law enforcement, and while more tolerant of heterogeneity, is less tolerant of trespass because of population concentration. Even in urban areas until quite recently, it was customary to give considerable leeway to concentrated "problem" populations in settling their differences and to wreak havoc upon each other, as long as the violence was not directed against more privileged members of society. With urbanization, higher expectations of broad law enforcement, greater recognition of individual rights and more militancy among minorities, violence has become less contained and is coming more to general attention.

However, even modifying our concept of the degree of increase, any escalation of violence can hardly be ignored.

### Some Social Factors of Violence

Canadian society, like Western society in general, has undergone enormous social, political, economic, and demographic changes – indeed the type of changes which can be expected to be accompanied by an increase in aggressive behaviour. A crucial factor has been the convergence of automation and a large proportion of unemployed youth, a natural situation for a rise in violent crime of a random nature and one for which time and an over-all drop in the birth rate is the most reliable cure.

Moreover, this is a period of great economic and social instability. The functional, as well as the spiritual value of unlimited acquisition and material comfort is now being questioned, but as a value, it is dying hard. Bitterness and frustration grows as the gap between expectations and actuality increase, a continually explosive situation on an individual and a collective basis.

As part of our material comfort, we have demanded freedom from pain and discomfort. As Illich has pointed out:

With rising levels of induced insensitivity to pain, the capacity to experience the simple joys and pleasures of life has equally declined. Increasingly stronger stimuli

are needed to provide people in an anaesthetic society with any sense of being alive. Drugs, violence and horror remain the only stimuli that can still elicit an experience of self. Wide-spread pain-killing increases the demand for painful excitation. (*Medical Nemesis*, McClelland & Stewart, 1975, p.106)

One result of the shrinking Earth and the growing assertion of third world countries is that it is no longer possible to export our potentially violent problems. There is no outlet for our potentially violent human debris or economically unnecessary populations. There are no colonies, no foreign legions, no undiscovered primitives to brutalize. Only a few mercenary armies remain and they are insufficient to absorb the burgeoning human flotsam. Astronomically growing prison populations provide a temporary answer, but ultimately create a delayed but more terrifying menace.

### Problems of Censorship

In view of the grim potential for violence which present circumstances offer, it is dangerous that we might be distracted by superficial concerns. Our media are primarily commercial enterprises and, as such, are a behavioural psychologist's dream. Outside of the world of pigeons, it would be difficult to find living creatures whose reward systems are so simple – money and/or recognition.

For those who sincerely believe that media content must be modified, classic consumer action in the form of organization boycotts of films, programs and magazines, as well as advertiser's products, is available to those who are concerned. Imaginative use of existing legislation is often effective in modifying marketing practice. For example, there are some indications that coercive methods are used to distribute films and magazines of a violent and/or pornographic genre. This is based on economics, as these have a low overhead and thus tend to make large profits if widely distributed. Thus retailers, in order to obtain a "respectable" product, must take the other as well.

Censorship and other forms of direct control of the mode of delivery of news, entertainment or artistic offer more dangers than benefits. It is like the man in Scripture who casts out a demon, only



to find it replaced by seven demons more evil than the first. While it is distasteful to observe blatant exploiters of sex and violence defending their actions by appeals to freedom of the press, it is almost impossible in practice to draw the line between what should or should not be permitted.

Attempts to safeguard sincere social, political, and artistic statements have tended to make a mockery of the law and the results are of value chiefly for the material they provide to social satirists. Censorship or other government control of the media is so open to abuse that it can hardly be justified for reasons even far more compelling than at present.

It is well to remember that in the past prohibition of liquor, which was generally a commodity in demand, brought many evils in its wake. Organized crime gained an ineradicable foothold in North America. Contempt for law, official corruption, and the establishment of a national police organization without accountability were some of the results of this foray into legislated morality. Moreover, the original goal of temperance or abstinence remained unrealized. North Americans have never learned to cope with liquor in a constructive adult manner and excessive drinking merely gained an undeserved aura of glamour and excitement.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Protestant theologian who was martyred by the Nazis, wisely wrote that the only way to fight evil was to let it run its course. There are already indications that the fad of uninhibited violence in popular entertainment has peaked, "snuffed out", one might say, by its own excesses. As violent entertainment, with or without sex, ceases to be chic, its fascination will fade, although not disappear. As Haskell, critic for the avant-garde *Village Voice* has said:

In each of us there is something base – the need, for example, to see someone else's death to certify our own aliveness. Perhaps it is the task of art to resist these urges, to return to an Aristotelian sense of moral responsibility. (*New York*, March, 1976, p. 60).

The current experiment in excess, if not distorted by intervention, is self-limiting and artistically and socially a maturing process. Rather than encouraging violence, it has permitted a catharsis for what could have been an even more violent

period. Most important, it should help us come to terms again with our true natures. Violence, like sex, is a fundamental part of our natures, basic to our survival. When either is denied, suppressed and hidden, it is no longer subject to control, but manifests itself in devious, grotesque and unspeakable ways.

## Conclusion

I have reviewed a considerable number of "studies" of violence and the media, but have not reacted to them in this brief for two reasons. First of all, they have been amply covered in previous presentations, and in your own researches. Secondly, I have yet to encounter a study which is not as commercial as the media itself or is merely an isolated laboratory segment without relevance to the complexities of real life. Questions about why some people are watching six hours of television a day or why children are endlessly sitting in front of the set are unconsidered, yet it may be a more basic problem than what they are actually seeing.

In considering causes of violent behaviour, we know that such factors as diet, chemical poisoning, both through pollution and drug dependency, modern obstetrical practices and unrestrained physical punishments in homes and schools can cause physical damage resulting in poor control. Is such cortical and neurological damage so widespread that it is having a social impact?

We are groping in much ignorance, not all of which can be banished by more research. If one reads and reflects on the modern world, the true violent threat is not the mugger on the street, but the growing institutionalization of terror. By hiding violence and denying it, we have driven it underground. Depriving it of identity, violence is called by euphemisms of control, security, rehabilitation, treatment or behaviour modification. This is a widespread and universal threat. The problem is not that we see too much violence, but that we see too little. The new violence has no face, no name and no accountability.

**J. Michael McAuley**

**Toronto**

## **The Quality of the Evidence: A Review of Lefkowitz**

For the last 25 years or so, there has been a great deal of more or less disciplined chatter surrounding the effects television has upon social behaviour. With the recent advent of “media violence,” i.e., cops and robbers television serials and such films as *Straw Dogs*, *Clockwork Orange*, *Rollerball*, the chatter has begun to focus upon the possible effects viewing violence on television might have upon the subsequent violent (aggressive) behaviour of the viewer.

There can be little doubt that the conclusions reached by this Commission will have far-reaching and direct consequences upon every citizen in this province. In this respect, it is of utmost importance that the Commission conduct the strictest possible inquiry into the effects of viewing televised violence – that the quality take precedence over the quantity of research. Research that yields “conclusive evidence” has, regardless of the number of studies supporting such evidence, yielded no evidence at all, if these studies are based on improper methodological formulations. To hold that we should be more influenced by how many studies conclude what rather than the correctness of these studies (as an important concomitant consideration) is tantamount to destroying the basic validity and nature of scientific inquiry.

The purpose of this brief is to review the methodological and theoretical accuracy of Lefkowitz, et al (1971) *Television Violence and Child Aggression: A Followup Study*. Such a review is necessary when one considers that this particular study has been acclaimed as the most conclusive evidence of the effects of television on violent behaviour (Jowett, 1975). Based on a non-random sample of 211 middle-class boys (the 216 girls included in the sample were, for all intents and purposes, not analyzed) Lefkowitz, et al (1971), concluded that “preference for violence in the third grade is causally related to aggressive behaviour ten years later” (pp. 49).

## **Criticism**

### *Dependent Variable – Measure of Aggression*

If one concurs that the aggressive behaviour citizens are most concerned with consists of an “application (or threat thereof) in real life settings, of high magnitude, physically harmful stimuli to the person or property of another person with the intention of inflicting harm . . . for the purpose of obtaining desired outcomes and/or avoiding undesirable ones” (Ellis, 1975a: 3-4), then the aggression described in the peer-rated items (Appendix 1) becomes highly questionable. Taken as a whole, it is more probable that these items are a measure of a form of irritation behaviour, common child behaviour, or simply rough play, from which the intent to injure is absent. Furthermore, what a third-grade subject might see as aggressive, an individual in Grade 13 might define as childish and/or irritating. The subjects were not asked about their perception of aggressive behaviour; nor whether, from their perspective, the peer-rating items were indicative of such behaviour. Furthermore, they were not asked about their own use, i.e., the form and extent of aggression.

The theoretical construct within which the dependent variable (AGG) is operationalized is the original frustration-aggression theory of Dollard, et al (1939). In using this conception three assumptions must be realized: 1) “aggression is always a consequence of frustration”; 2) the aggression one is interested in is explosive, and that man is compelled to behave aggressively via a natural release mechanism; 3) that frustration results from interference with goal-directed action. The descriptions of aggressive behaviour seem to be less indicative of explosive behaviour than they are of a form of behaviour rationally used by children to obtain want satisfaction. Furthermore, the role of television as an external stimulus which causes frustration (which, in turn results directly in compulsive aggression) by interfering with goal-directed action has yet to be developed in this study or any other.

However, notwithstanding such definition-orienting nattering, there are four methodological problems related to the formulation of this dependent variable.

1) The open-ended characteristic leaves the reader unaware of the actual temporal pattern involved. When subjects (Grades three, eight and 13, inclusive) were asked to rate the aggressiveness of other children, there is no indication that such rating was not based upon behaviour which preceded the period during which the measurement of viewing violence on television was taken.

2) Since aggression was not observed by the researchers, there is no way to compare actual behaviour patterns with the recalled patterns of the subjects. Thus it is possible that a personality clash between two children might have influenced a sort of vindictive rating of aggression.

3) Situational factors affecting aggressive behaviour were completely neglected. Whether the peer-rated aggression, per se, took place when social control agents, i.e., teachers or parents, were present or whether it took place in peer context in which the children were given free rein, i.e., recess or before or after school, is of great importance. Conceivably, the absence or presence of "authority figures" and their response to overt aggression is more efficacious in regulating aggressive behaviour than is the viewing of violence on television.

4) The simple fact that aggression at Grade 13 (AGG13) is dependent upon a recall span of ten years renders it highly discreditable. Turner (1972:204), points out that the shorter the reference period the more accurate is the recollection of violent behaviour. With a sample size of 5000 the optimal period of reference is about six months.

#### *Independent Variable – Measure of Viewed Television Violence:*

In arriving at an index for this variable the researchers neglected to ask the subjects whether or not, from the subject's point of view, television had an effect upon their overt or covert aggressiveness. By using outside NBC raters a "violence diet" may have been obtained that was not at all equivalent to the "diet" the subjects actually received. As noted elsewhere (Ellis, 1975a:35), televised violence, because of its lack of realism, has been

perceived by children as being the "antithesis of violence".

Furthermore, using parents to obtain information about the child's favourite television programs may have resulted in two extraneous influences. On the one hand, parental reporting may have been a reflection of the amount of time the child spent watching a particular program rather than the child's actual preference for that program. While the child may have favoured Program A compared to Program B, network scheduling might have resulted in the child watching Program B five times a week, yet Program A only once. On the other hand, since the middle class tends to view aggressive behaviour as undesirable (Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967), it is quite possible that parents with previously aggressive children saw the interview format as an opportunity to displace responsibility for such behaviour on to an external stimulus, television.

In this respect, when Grade eight boys were asked about their preferred television programs there was no association between viewing violent television (TVVL8) and subsequent aggressive behaviour in Grade 13 (AGG13) ( $r = -.019$ ) (Ellis, 1975a:30). It is interesting that this zero-order correlation was not reported by Lefkowitz, et al (1971).

Also pertinent here is the implicit assumption that television viewing of violence is solely an instigator of subsequent aggression. Although illustrated in previous research (Singer, 1971), the possibility that viewing violence on television might have a catharsis effect upon the viewer was completely neglected within the theoretical and operational structure of this study. Furthermore, the interview schedule, per se, tended to neglect numerous variables which may instigate, facilitate, or inhibit aggression, regardless of the availability of television. Such variables include:

- parental socialization practices
- parental reaction to television violence
- parental use of violence
- reinforcement given children for their use of non-violent means of goal attainment

- parental punishment of violence
- the presence or absence of “authority figures”
- peer support of violence
- sex roles

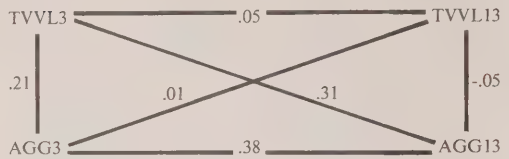
#### *The Findings – Does Causality Exist?*

Heise (1970), has illustrated how the cross-lagged panel technique may be effective for making causal inferences, provided that path or partial coefficients are used, and directionality and time ordering are unequivocal. Lefkowitz, et al. (1971), however, have chosen to report raw zero-order correlations which, in fact, do not provide good information for deducing causal inference (Blalock, 1964; Heise, 1970). Furthermore, Lefkowitz, et al. (1971), neglect to include “error terms” leading into the final measurements, i.e., TVVL13 and AGG13. Central to this technique, these error terms indicate the aggregation of all outside disturbances affecting variables TVVL and AGG between measurements, thereby specifying the variance not explained by TVVL2 and AGG3 (Heise, 1970). Although not reported, the amount of unexplained variance was 89 per cent. Even more interesting is the fact that the variable Lefkowitz, et al. (1971) cite as being the best predictor of AGG13, i.e., TVVL3, left 96 per cent of the variance unexplained. However, these facts alone do not rule out the possibility of causality.

Even if we accept the zero-order correlations as useful, any attempt to make inferences would not prove fruitful. A prerequisite of such an attempt is that at least one arrow must be missing from the model (Blalock, 1964). In our case no *theoretically* nor *methodologically* relevant arrows, through which a set of recursive equations (ibid.), might be developed, are missing. While TVVL13 might be considered a likely candidate (see Figure 1), the fact that all the associated arrows are zero, i.e., missing, places this variable outside the model. Furthermore, since the technique evolves out of path analysis (Heise, 1970:3), it may be argued that such zero-order correlation coefficients indicate an unanalyzed relationship. In path terminology they represent the numerical value of “bidirectional” correlation arrows which link “exogenous” variables (Duncan, 1966:118).

**Figure 1**

#### **The Correlations Between Television Violence and Aggression for 211 Boys over a 10-year Lag**



TVVL3 – Violent Television Viewing at Grade 3

TVVL13 – Violent Television Viewing at Grade 13

AGG3 – Aggressive Behaviour at Grade 3

AGG13 – Aggressive Behaviour at Grade 13

The open-ended nature of the aggression measurement coupled with the influence previously aggressive children may have had upon their parents’ reporting of television preferences might have resulted in the directionality and time ordering of the variables becoming confused. It is also possible that the levels of aggressive behaviour which children bring with them to the “tube,” as well as their subsequent aggressive behaviour may be more a function of sex role factors than actual viewing preference. It was mentioned earlier that the Lefkowitz, et al. (1971) results were only applicable to boys who, due to sex-role identification, are generally more aggressive than girls (Weis and Borges, 1973:81-87). In this connection it is pertinent to note that data supplied by Lefkowitz, et al. (1971:57) indicate that *aggressive behaviour at Grade three* is strongly associated with *subsequent aggressive behaviour* (AGG3 is correlated with itself and AGG8,  $r = .48$ ; and AGG8 is correlated with itself and AGG13,  $r = .65$ ).

The data further indicate that the relationship between television viewing and subsequent aggressive behaviour may be influenced by an extraneous variable – popularity. Popularity at Grade three and Grade 13 are correlated with themselves and with the amount of television viewing at Grade 13,  $r = .22$  and  $-.26$ , respectively (ibid.:52-3). Furthermore, the amount of time spent watching television at Grade three is



negatively associated with itself and peer-rated aggression at Grade three,  $r = .19$  (ibid.:54). If popularity connotes peer-group knowledge of the individual, then it is quite possible that peer-rated aggression may be more a reflection of the extraneous influence of peer-group contact and possibly peer-group approval of aggression, than the actual realities of any particular individual's behaviour.

## Conclusion

While Lefkowitz et al. (1971) may have withstood the critical pen of numerous methodological researchers, one cannot help but wonder how many of these individuals suffered from "tubular vision" during their critical review. The foregoing has been a critical evaluation of this study. We found that the theoretical and methodological inadequacies of the measurements of the dependent and independent variables plus the exclusion of numerous variables associated with the instigation, facilitation and inhibition of violence rendered the study's conclusion highly questionable. Furthermore, the fact that the researchers did not report data which would have been unfavourable to their theoretical expectations places, in my view, the researchers themselves in a rather precarious position. In light of all this, three concluding remarks may be made. Firstly, it is quite plausible that the relationship between viewing violence on television and subsequent violent behaviour is spurious (either due to extraneous factors or possibly the style of data collection itself). Secondly, the dependent and independent variables may, in fact, vary independently of each other. Thirdly, the data, i.e., zero-order correlation coefficients, were not applicable to the causality-oriented methodological technique employed.

## Appendix 1

**Table 1: Comparison of peer rating items for three time periods**

### *3rd grade*

1. Who does not obey the teacher?
2. Who often says, "Give me that!"?
3. Who gives dirty looks or sticks out their tongue at other children?
4. Who makes up stories and lies to get other children into trouble?
5. Who does things that bother others?
6. Who starts a fight over nothing?
7. Who pushes or shoves children?
8. Who is always getting into trouble?
9. Who says mean things?
10. Who takes other children's things without asking?

### *5-year follow up*

#### *8th grade*

1. Who does not obey the teacher?
2. OMITTED
3. Who gives dirty looks or unfriendly gestures to other students?
4. Who makes up stories and lies to get other students into trouble?
5. Who does things that bother others?
6. Who starts a fight over nothing?
7. Who pushes or shoves students?
8. Who is always getting into trouble?
9. Who says mean things?
10. Who takes other students things without asking?

### *10-year followup*

#### *13th grade*

1. Who did not listen to the teacher?
2. OMITTED

3. Who gave dirty looks or made unfriendly gestures to other students?
4. Who made up stories and lies to get other students into trouble?
5. Who did things that bothered others?
6. Who started fights over nothing?
7. Who pushed or shoved students?
8. Who was always getting into trouble?
9. Who used to say mean things?
10. Who took other students' things without asking?

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## Lakehead University Thunder Bay

I regret that I was unable to appear before your Commission when it came to Lakehead University, but, nevertheless, I would like to give you my opinion on the function of violence in the various media and the effects violent television has on the quality of life in Canada.

I am unable to claim an understanding of the effects television violence has on individuals. Whether or not violent input via the media makes the individual more aggressive, and whether this in turn leads to violent behaviour, is an exceedingly difficult question to answer in a scientific manner. Psychologists and other commissions have tackled it, and frankly they are not much closer to an answer. There are so many variables you must control for, and so many sources of invalidity, the question is answerable at best only in part. Even if experimental conditions were perfect and (let us assume for a moment) you proved media violent input led to aggressive behaviour, you would be left with a sociological question. Why do some groups and individuals subjected to violent media react violently while others do not?

To my mind, a violent act involves the social structure as a whole, subcultural values and situational determinants. Violence on the media as a triggering device is probably overrated. As a conditioner, at best, it probably only shares top billing with other equally powerful agencies and institutions.

The question encompasses more ground than you are covering. Canada, contrary to the self-image of many Canadians, is a violent nation. Our history has been made up, to no small extent, of violent oppression of dissent, of wars, brutality against minority groups, ritualistic youthful brain-bashing, et cetera. All this predates television and represents an effective argument against blaming television for whatever is currently happening in Canada. Look at the way we bring up our children; how we play with them; what we encourage them to strive for; and how we discipline them. These basic aspects of life in Canada play an equal role in the causation of violence. We are a violent people aside from the nature of our

television. Television violence, in many ways, is merely an indicator of the violence within us.

Having said this, let me further state that, because we can't prove that violence in the media leads to violence in the street, and because the process of violence is very detached from the media, and because Canada is a violent nation anyway, does not mean that the content of the media should not be closely considered for its adverse effect on society.

Personally, I do see that television violence has odious and sinister effects, but the effects are beyond the current controversy. My main criticism of television violence is that it is an agent, not for positive change or negative change, but rather for keeping us as we are. This may sound foolish, but basically television violence should be condemned, not for any violence it may or may not be causing, but because it is acting to preserve many of our outmoded prejudices, notions, and ways of looking at the world. Canada desperately needs to become more sophisticated as a nation. Canadians need a new way of looking at people and the world. Television violence is one of the factors that is preventing this change from occurring. It is a force acting to replicate our traditional, out-moded way of life.

Media should be used to bring about constructive change. For example, I would cite the work of the National Film Board's *Challenge for Change* series. Currently, our prime-time television is wedging Canadians within a highly archaic value and perceptual framework and on this basis I suggest change is needed.

### The Function of Media

Television and newspapers with their violent substance transmit the central values in society. At one time, our values were reinforced in a more direct way. We lived in tight-knit communities in which the criminal was close at hand. The drama and rituals of punishment were an aspect of life appreciated in the widest sense by all. Currently our society is not close knit. We don't see the criminal nor his works. Nevertheless, we have, in a sense, a need to be told what bad has been done, or that there is evil present. Television transcends our isolated lifestyle and fulfils this function. We



know there is evil out there. Television defines it. Every group or society needs the boundaries between good and evil made explicit for them by some agent or institution. Canadians seem to thrive on the moral lessons available via the media.

Media violence teaches people what is bad and this is a necessary function. It provides needed reference points by which an individual might plot his course. We must remember that, by teaching people what society in general considers bad, it is, by implication, teaching people what is good. *The National News* describes precisely the boundaries of contemporary evil while *Cannon*, owing to its similarity, reinforces the notions built up with entertainment. The nether world of crime, corruption and evil are depicted by both official and unofficial channels, the two working to provide people with definitive points of reference for their conceptual universe. Although I think we get more reinforcement than the French did during the aftermath of their revolution, basically, television is still performing the same function as daily trips to the guillotine, public hangings, tar and feathering. Television defines our devils and witches. The archaic heretic or blasphemer meets with the psychotic killer, kidnapper, wife beater, and gangland thugs on prime time, every night.

### Reinforcement of Traditional Perspectives

With the above, I have outlined how media act as a necessary force in society; a force, incidentally, that maintains the intellectual status quo of the nation. I shall now discuss a few particular notions that are false, simplistic and contribute to justification of many of our age-old beliefs, notions and prejudices. These assumptions involve Canadians' perception of the nature of man, the nature of crime and the criminal and the nature of good and evil in life. Again, I am not saying television shouldn't portray societal evils; I am saying the presentation should be less mediocre, less clear cut, less unsophisticated and more talented. We can't continue to exist as a democratic nation if our media pumps out programming that fulfils the ancient beliefs that reinforce age-old moral concepts that have outlived their usefulness.

(a) The first assumption that occupies much of what is implicit and explicit in modern television programming is the old one about human greed being the prime motivational force in human life. The objective truth or falsity of this belief is secondary in importance to the role that it plays in setting up self-fulfilling prophecy. We've been telling ourselves since Adam and Eve that man's basic fault is greed. Even though many of man's actions are motivated by other emotions, our preoccupation with greed has led to an ever-narrowing channel of alternatives. Modern media have aided immeasurably in this process.

(b) The second assumption states that bad men are a particular type of men, almost a breed apart. Biologically, socially, and morally they are portrayed as peculiar. All sociological studies show that this notion is patently false. Criminals, for the most part, are astonishingly similar to everyone else. Nevertheless, the media, heavy-handed in every respect, continue to set these people in relief. The harm lies in evil's converse. A simplistic portrayal of evil will produce a simplistic conception of good and of responsibility. It is so incredibly easy to live up to the standards of good as set by the media. All you need do is prevent yourself from molesting a child, robbing a bank or having a high-speed auto chase with a cop. The state of being good can no longer be that easy to attain. In short, the modern world can no longer afford such black-and-white distinctions.

(c) A third assumption involves law enforcement agencies. The dominant theme in modern media is still one of good prevailing over evil. With adequate cash and super, unbending talent, it is presumed that crime can be eradicated. A corollary to these assumptions is that police really want to get rid of crime – even if they could.

Both statements are patently false. We have found that deviance is relative to the society in question. In a society of saints, Saint John's neglect of his roses may well be perceived as equally serious a crime as Charles Manson's murders. "Crime", over the long term, does not decrease. There is much evidence to suggest that police and society have vested interest in maintaining a level of criminality. Certainly, television has a vested interest in its portrayal. The

drama of the cop and robber has been enacted for centuries and no amount of money, reactionary politics or human tolerance will eliminate it. The evil is within ourselves. Evil is what we wish to define as such. We need criminals as we need food. They give our life meaning and definition.

Regarding this third assumption, again I would suggest that the main fault is that the media tackle the issues with moral heavy-handedness, simplistic viewpoints, and moral irrelevance! This viewpoint encourages a misplaced optimism or pessimism. There is no such thing as an improvement or a reversal in the crime-fighting situation. There is merely a lessening or growing projection of some suspicion, distrust, insecurity or unhappiness onto the criminal. What I am suggesting is that media should play a role in underlining the real source of unhappiness, et cetera.

There are many other notions and assumptions national media maintain and cultivate; the above is only a partial list. A complete list would be the goal of a study. My point, in summary, is that the dominant character of the media is essentially conservative. It is doing nothing to eradicate traditional ethnic and regional rivalries. The media, with its emphasis on violence, is doing nothing to improve intellectual quality on an individual or national basis. It is a force that is leaving us ill-prepared for future difficulties.

*Ian Stewart*  
*Lecturer*

## **Metropolitan Toronto Separate School Board**

### **The Phenomenon of Violence**

Nine years ago, at the height of the drug traffic among young people in Toronto, a teacher recalls a conversation with two directors of student services. She was trying to find out what was being done, what could be done, to protect young people before they became damaged, perhaps irreparably, by their adventuresome sorties into the hazardous world of drugs. These men were helpful, but it was a gratuitous remark that stayed with her. "It is violence that is now coming over the horizon, and it will be the new, and more terrible, obscenity." Today, some ten years later, violence is so all-pervasive as to be almost taken for granted, like the air we breathe, only not like it!

It would be tedious to catalogue again the quantity and nature of the incidents. The appointment of The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry can serve to focus our attention on this phenomenon. Few doubt the evidence that violence pervades contemporary society. It is equally clear that, given man's technological capacity for refined and massive destructiveness, society can only take alarm if violent means serve as the sole solution to settle conflicts, personal, interpersonal and communal. It is hoped, then, that through the work of the Commission, Canadians may soberly re-examine the phenomenon of violence. If violence has become, as this brief believes, a mutilating experience in our society, the accumulated data of the Commission may be a rich source for reflection and action. It may offer us a better basis for explaining and modifying violence. Through it we may come to sense in what way violence increasingly encroaches on daily human affairs, impairing the quality of life.

### **The Concerns of this Brief**

This brief concerns itself specifically with the nature of violence on television and the television viewing of children from pre-school years to high school. Newspapers and plays are less appealing and less accessible to this age group, and movie

houses can be out of bounds. Let us say at the outset, however, that we are not unaware that many factors<sup>1</sup> other than television-viewing may contribute to hostility and, in time, aggressive behaviour: poverty, injustice, sexual and social discrimination, and especially rejecting and hostile parents. These factors are not within the scope of the Commission's task; we shall, therefore, confine ourselves to violence on television.

### **The Nature of the Medium of Television**

The nature of the medium of television is such that it needs visual material to express inner activity. Where character and spoken word can create conflict within the confined area of the stage, on television the body must function as the metaphor of interior activity. It is the medium of action and motion and activity. For this reason, violence had been a mainstay of television art from the beginning.<sup>2</sup> It is, however, the recent change in the style of violence on television that is startling. In the more traditional varieties of conflict, injury and death were part of the expected dance of life. Then bullets might be emissaries of good, clean death.

Now, they are instruments that tear huge, bleeding wounds in human beings. The traditional death by gun-fire is no longer the clutch-and-fall pattern but a slowed-down, drawn-out paroxysm. In the magic of the "instant" replays of professional football and hockey, the bone-cracking impact of athletes is filmed to resemble the movement of ballet. Under these circumstances, viewers are mesmerized by indiscriminate destructiveness. How shall we reflect upon our children's growing up before this new and graphic violence? What is happening to them as they watch one vicious beating or mutilation to the next?

### **The Child in the Face of Violence**

In the human being, adult or child, research shows that aggressive behaviour is learned,<sup>3</sup> and this behaviour is learned<sup>4</sup> both through imitation<sup>5</sup> and selective reinforcement. The angry parent who punishes his child's violent behaviour by beating him probably increases the child's aggressive tendencies.<sup>6</sup> When many already possess an inborn propensity for learning aggressive

behaviour, the learning itself comes more easily. We can reflect here on the conditioning role of the replays of violence in the National Hockey League. When Maloney, from behind, flattens Glennie with a punch on the head, and then bangs him up and down like a rag doll, bouncing his head on the ice, the scene is enacted at least seven times in the replays.

### **The Child and Television Violence**

How shall we situate the child before television violence, given these research findings? A responsible adult – the term admits of many degrees – might be expected to see the use of violence on television as a matter of artistic discernment. He could test the validity of its use within the artistic statement as a whole. *The Day of the Jackal*, shown recently on television, is a case in point. It is grippingly filmed and fascinating until the very end. There are murders, but no dwelling of the camera on open wounds and bizarre deaths. All the loose ends of human experience are there, the good and the bad truthfully mingled. It is the statement of an artist. The mature adult may be expected to assess its theme of conflict and the nature of its portrayal. By contrast, one cannot assume that the child before the television set has learned how to control his emotions.

He is in the process of becoming more aware of himself and of others in his own way; he is becoming more aware of his responsibilities, of discovering within his own experience the responses that are appropriate for him – how he can forgive, to what extent he can handle his dark moments. While there is no unanimity in the research on the effects of the viewing of televised violence, the opinion that aggression is increased by it has received the most support.<sup>7</sup> Children become more violence-prone; they pick up distorted ideas about the right way to solve problems;<sup>8</sup> they grow disturbed and fearful. The conclusions, based on solid scientific data, and not on the opinion of one or another scientists, are reported in five volumes of the Scientific Advisory Committee<sup>9</sup> and need not be fed back to the current Commission on Violence. People, unaware of this report, have their own telling evidence here in Toronto today. To quote one: an eight-year old

boy, present when the police found the slain taxi driver in his car in the parking lot, could comment with some disappointment: "That is not how they do it on television." On page two of this same report, one remark of Surgeon General Jesse Steinfeld is more than ordinarily to the point: "The data on social phenomena such as television and/or aggressive behaviour will never be clear enough for all social scientists to agree on the formulation of a succinct statement of causality. But there comes a time when the data are sufficient to justify action.<sup>10</sup> That time has come." The title of the Circular P1J1, issued by the Ministry of Education as provincial curriculum policy for the primary and junior divisions of the elementary schools in Ontario, is aptly called *The Formative Years*.<sup>11</sup> It speaks of these years as providing for each child a chance "to share in the life of the community with competence, integrity and joy". It sets out that the curriculum provides among other opportunities those which "develop the moral and aesthetic sensitivity necessary for a complete and responsible life." We understand these curriculum guidelines to be a vehicle through which learning by a child in these formative years will be, among other things, a preparation for the future. But to begin a better world, the beginning of that world must be visible in daily life. There is no reason to expect much to happen in the future if the signs of hope are not made visible in the present.

Justice will not be born out of jealousy, gentleness out of cruelty, love out of hate, nor will a non-violent world be born out of the rising tide of anti-social violence in present-day social life. A non-violent life style may, however, have a chance to emerge where people are able to relate to each other in a basically non-violent way.<sup>12</sup> It is our opinion that the province's curriculum policy has, in television, a valuable ally in creating such a life style; that violence on television should be looked at as part of a larger contest;<sup>13</sup> and that we need a shared approach to try to make television the learning medium it could be.

## Recommendations

The two following recommendations are made

with these words of the Commission on Violence in mind:

"When our work is completed, it will provide a comprehensive and up-to-date collection of writing on communication violence and social violence. This unique collection will serve Canadians for years to come and will provide a foundation for social research of the future." We do not doubt the Commission will provide such a body of valuable research. We do wish, however, that this research be popularized in whatever media (print, design, film) accessible to the majority of the people and that its findings be assured a vehicle for long-ranging and continuing application.

We, therefore, make two recommendations: the first is the introduction of a primer<sup>14</sup> based on the Commission's findings and preferably in conjunction with the Ministry's P1J1, on how to watch television,<sup>15</sup> how to get more out of it, and how and where to make suggestions for more creative programs. This recommendation underlines how important it is that television, "the unstructured classroom" of after- and before-school living, be utilized for profitable learning. The acquiring of the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as the development of a personal value system, informed decision-making, and an appreciation of the other need concrete situations which can be worked through as a common experience in the classroom.

It is the common experience, shared by children and teacher, that very often makes the difference between knowing about how to live and knowing how to live. It is not easy for a classroom to provide these common experiences where learners become, not observers, but participants. Television can provide this occasion if what was seen the night before is worked through together at school. The primer, with descriptive statements; with suggestions of how to explore television's appeal and impact; with a series of questions; with personal reports of children is just that – a primer. A lot of creativity will be needed to prevent its being treated as just another syllabus to be worked through. The effort will be well worthwhile, however, if children see themselves as participating in a new kind of society.

The second recommendation is that an



independent violence-monitoring service be established. Such a service should in no way be equated with censorship. A *New York Times* critic may influence movie-goers' choice of entertainment; he does not, however, infringe on their right to choose what they will see. There are a number of models for violence-monitoring on television.<sup>16</sup> Gerbner's combines qualitative as well as quantitative features. Through his content analysis of television output, his standard coding system records the number and kinds of violent actions, and provides an index of the rate of violent episodes per hour of broadcasting. The manner in which the aggression is portrayed may be even more important than the amount presented. These qualitative features are measured in terms of the frequency with which righteous and villainous characters use violent tactics, and the percentage of leading characters involved in killing, either as killers and victims. Other rateable aspects of violence include its instigators, its rewarding and punishing consequences, and the types of people who are repeatedly victimized. The prevalence, rate and role component scores are combined into an overall violence index. If these patterns of violent relationships were from time to time publicized as separate violence rates for different networks, sponsors and programs, accountability for violence would be pinpointed. At the same time, more inventive producers providing entertaining program without the gratuitous use of violence would have their efforts recognized.

These two recommendations:

1. a primer based on the Commission's findings, and preferably in conjunction with the Ministry's PIIJ, on how to watch television, how to get more out of it, and how and where to make suggestions for more creative programs.
2. an independent violence-monitoring service be established implying a shared responsibility on the part of government, teachers, parents and the communications industry for improving the quality of television.<sup>17</sup> A concerted effort to eliminate the routine use of violence can result in a new creativity on the part of producers; far from settling for merely bland fare, as some viewers

fear, we are likely to find ourselves with exciting and challenging content. In addition we may be finally in a position to seriously examine television as a cultural transmitter and innovator of attitudes and patterns of behaviour.<sup>18</sup>

## Endnotes and References

- 1 Within a modern society, three major sources of aggressive behaviour are drawn upon to varying degrees. One is the aggression modelled and reinforced by family members. Though familial influences play a major role in setting the direction of social development, the family is embedded in a network of other social systems. The sub-culture in which a person resides and with which he has repeated contact provides a second source of aggression. The types of behaviours that are exemplified and valued in community sub-systems may support or counteract familial influences. The third source of aggressive behaviour is the symbolic modelling provided by the mass media, especially television.
- Bandura, Albert, *Aggression: a social learning analysis*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1973 p. 93.
- 2 Those who create the programs acknowledge quite candidly that conflict is essential for engrossing drama, and physical violence is the easiest and intellectually non-demanding way of depicting it.  
As one producer put it: In dramatizing conflict on television, man against nature is too expensive; man against God is too intellectual; man against himself is too psychological and leaves too little opportunity for action, so man against man is what one usually ends up with.
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- 10 Television and social behaviour: reports and papers. A technical report to the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behaviour. Ed. by John P. Murray, Eli A. Rubinstein, and George A. Comstock, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1972.
- 11 229. – (1) It is the duty of a teacher,  
(c) to inculcate by precept and example respect for religion and the principles of Judaeo-Christian morality and the highest regard for truth, justice, loyalty, love of country, humanity, benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, purity, temperance and all other virtues; (The Education Act, 1974).
- 12 We must begin to modify our adult society, the real adult society in which our children are being raised, if we are to reduce aggression.  
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- 13 "Themes of conflict can, in fact, serve to counteract assaultive modes of conduct. Modelling pro-social solutions to conflict provides viewers with constructive options that tend to reduce their dependence on combative tactics."  
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- prim-er<sup>2</sup> (prim'er) n. 1 a person or thing that primes. 2 a cap or cylinder containing a little gunpowder, used for firing a charge of dynamite, etc. 3 a first coat of paint, etc. (-prime<sup>3</sup>)
- 15 "We must train our children to discriminate between aggressive models who have social sanction and those who do not." (*Psychology Today*)  
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- 18 "Television can teach viewers to behave in a variety of situations that extend well beyond the learning experiences available within the family or the immediate community."
- Bandura, A.

## The Toronto Sun Toronto

I noticed in a recent survey conducted by the Vice-President of CIL with other business heads that the majority of those individuals feel the daily press does not report business in a balanced manner, is anti-business, and only one out of 38 businessmen polled indicated that he had confidence in reporters. That is only one area, but it seems that this kind of complaint has spread.

It wasn't long ago when people used to decide arguments by saying they read it in the newspaper. The other day I read where someone describing a public figure said: "He lies like a newspaper." Newspapers are drowning in criticism, informed or otherwise. It seems that the more emotional the times, the greater the attacks on the press. These attacks seem to rise in direct proportion to the intensity of public frustration in meeting the problems of the day. And certainly we have enough of those.

I noticed recently that the Chairman was critical of the news media generally about being on the defensive about this Commission and, if she is quoted correctly, said "The print media in general has been hysterical". Well, perhaps I am defensive, but hopefully I am not hysterical. Certainly I am concerned.

A free press does not exist in one-half the newspapers in the world now and the first dangers to those freedoms occur when controls – no matter how well-meaning – are initiated. At *The Sun*, we feel any new control is a danger and should be resisted.

We echo the words of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who is a former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, when he said to members of the American Newspaper Publishers Association: "It is the mark of a democracy that its press should be filled with bad news. When one comes to a country where the press is filled with good news, one can be pretty sure the jails are filled with good men."

*The Sun* is just over four years old. It began from the ashes of another newspaper, without the benefit of market surveys or intensive research, but I recall some of the discussions that took place when we discussed the size, format and content.

We knew that radio had changed substantially. Once network-dominated, now there are thousands of stations broadcasting their own things – country, classical, all news, et cetera. The listener can turn the dial to anything he wants to hear – free from any kind of communication directive, which once made him listen to what the network wanted him to hear.

Magazines have gone through the same splintering of audience. *Life*, *Look* and other general interest books are dead. Readers now get most of their magazines targeted to a special interest – whether it be fishing, gardening, or dress designing. While it is true that television still holds the mass audience with its networks, how long will it continue with the advent of cable television and its promise of 20 or 30 channels?

The electronic media has an obvious edge in speed, and has become an aggressive competitor in news gathering, including investigative reporting, but it is also restricted severely in time. We are also surrounded by suburban weekly papers – several of them successful, and, in my view, their numbers are increasing.

Large newspapers, we felt on the other hand, had not really changed that much and yet their audience was breaking up into smaller groups who make their own rules, arrive at their own philosophical and moral views of the world, and choose their facts accordingly. The process of fragmentation probably started many years ago, but I think large newspapers generally missed most of it.

We were writing about society, while people today are thinking about their individual selves. We felt we had to communicate more with our readers. We felt we should be tabloid because it offers an alternative to our opposition. We felt we should be brief, opinionated, interpretive and, yes, perhaps brash. We felt we should provide fresh news and fresh angles, which weren't on television.

We were guided in part by the late Barney Kilgore, a major force in building *The Wall Street Journal* from its original circulation of 37,000 to almost one and-a-half million, when he argued: "The reader needs and wants as much useful information as we can give him. Hence, many short items. Then add a couple of very thorough



stories, and a strong editorial page of high readability. Do that accurately, make it known, and you cannot fail."

We felt that a newspaper without an opinion is a newspaper without a personality. We are not unaware at *The Sun* that we have been accused occasionally of being sensational and accused of putting an overwhelming emphasis on bad news. I have the feeling that most of our critics like the sensationalism and like to read the bad news, but they are not too happy about admitting it. They have grown up with the idea that it is not very nice.

A tabloid, by its very format, tends to look sensational. If providing a dramatic presentation of events so as to give them a forceful impact on the reader; if using big headlines and vigorous writing, lots of photos and editorial-type cartoons; if simplification of facts into everyday language is sensational – then I would happily plead guilty. Our circulation has more than doubled since we started, and I think that is proof that readers prefer this to a dull approach.

As to the reporting of bad news or violent news: I take the stance that a police blotter is still a legitimate source of news, and *The Sun* has taken the stance from day one that it would be dishonest not to provide a recital of unhappy and unpleasant events, if, in fact, that is what is happening.

It would be equally dishonest, and certainly would not be a public service, if each time one of these events took place, we set out deliberately to offset it with some pleasant portion of equal length, which some of our critics would have us do.

It can be argued that dramatizing bad news and violence promotes more bad news and violence, but it can also be argued that, because the media has reported disaster or violence in such detail, public opinion has been led to demand and get overdue reforms; just recently, I was drawn to the unalterable conclusion that the dramatic pictures and stories of the Italian earthquake tragedy, on television and in the newspapers, were largely responsible for favourable financial reaction around the world.

Violence in the media is quite an all-encompassing title. But, surely we must separate the reporting of violence in newspapers and the

presentation of such as entertainment on television.

We, in the print media, have nothing to do with the latter. Therefore, we will confine ourselves to discussing the reporting of violence.

Should it be reported? Yes. From the Olympic massacre in Munich to the Vietnam War and the liquidation by the Communists in Cambodia – and, yes – even the Demeter murder in Mississauga. They all had one thing in common: they were news.

Newspapers, by tradition, have put the most important news of the day on Page One and, at *The Sun*, the importance of the story dictates the size of the type used to display it. If the story on any particular day happens to be a hostage drama in one of our penitentiaries, or a government budget, it will get a black heading on our front page. And we will hear from some critic (but not many – very few complaints) that we exploited the penitentiary story. Not a word will be said about the same treatment of the budget story.

When does the reporting of violence constitute exploitation, and when does it constitute a responsible reflection of the community the newspaper serves?

A responsible newspaper won't report violence merely to sell more newspapers, and the overwhelming majority of daily papers in Canada are responsible.

But, we won't shy away from reporting violence when the nature of the violence is such that it is, or could be, affecting the community.

For instance, a shocking accident picture taken on the Don Valley Parkway could run in *The Toronto Sun*. It is important that the people of Toronto know that kind of thing can happen and is happening on their expressways. The same picture though, taken on an expressway in New Orleans, would not be run in *The Sun*. The only excuse then would be the inherent appeal in the violence of the picture.

One of the most important things our newspaper does is report to the community as a whole what all the other parts of the community are doing and thinking. If the local dock workers think the Harbour Commission is mistreating them, so much so that they resort to violence against the Commission, then the rest of the

community should know how they feel and how they are acting. If they blow up the Commission building, a newspaper is obliged to show that as dramatically as possible.

A newspaper is obliged to report the anti-social behaviour of any part of the community to the whole community (the newspaper's readers), no matter how violent the anti-social behaviour. The law-abiding citizen must be told what the criminals are doing. They are a threat to the community's way of life, and we should know about them. The more violent their behaviour, the more important it is for us to know about them.

If newspapers seem sometimes to emphasize the violence in their communities out of proportion, say, to City Hall activities, it is because the violence being done in a community is a more dramatic and immediate (and possibly more final) threat to the community's well-being.

How about international violence then? Should *The Toronto Sun* have used the picture of the Saigon Chief of Police firing a pistol at point blank range at the head of a young Viet Cong? The same judgment applies. In this case, the newspaper's responsibility (in foreign coverage), is to show its readers what the rest of the world is doing. If the Vietnam war has brought us to this (the public execution of a youngster in the main street of Saigon), then a newspaper is obliged to make that point as best it can – by running the incredibly violent picture.

A serious problem for newspapers is the reporting of racial violence. When does the reporting of it serve only to encourage it? How much racial nonsense would simply disappear if it were not reported? Would the slogan writers and Allen Gardens' speakers simply pack up and go home, if the press and radio ignored them? Maybe they would – but maybe they wouldn't. It could be that, without exposure, they would grow and get stronger. It could be that, without newspapers to spotlight their activities, they could recruit and spread, shielded from public focus.

It seems to me that a newspaper has no real choice. It can be vigilant to the dangers of being manipulated in this area; it can be certain its editors and reporters are alert to the sensitivity of the problem; it can be ever watchful for prejudice

in its news columns. But – in the end – it must report what it finds happening in the community.

In some quarters, *The Sun* has been accused of excessive zeal in reporting violence. We do have a well-manned police desk and our tabloid format lends itself to dramatic presentation of action – often violent, but that should be expected in Toronto. In 1974, there were 35 murders in Metro; in 1975, 48; and this year there have been 19 – ahead of last year's pace.

The fact of the matter is that violent crimes of almost every type are increasing in most urban centres, certainly Toronto. If newspapers seem to be carrying more reports on violence, they are only reflecting the change in their community – something they had better do.

The makeup of the news section of *The Sun* is determined six nights a week between 10 p.m. and midnight. A small group of editors, headed by the Managing Editor, decide which of the 85,000 to 90,000 words generated daily are going to get the most play.

We make no excuses, but it is a business conducted in haste and, of course, is a matter of opinion. Each day following, that opinion is re-assessed by others, including myself. Of course, mistakes are made and will continue to be made. But all responsible newspapers, including *The Sun*, are constantly reviewing their coverage because we must satisfy our readers.

Circulation at best is a fragile thing, especially at *The Sun*, where we home deliver only one day a week. Our greatest censors are our readers and it is them whom we must please.

*Douglas Creighton*

**Professor F. K. Jakobsh,  
University of Waterloo  
Waterloo**

### **Television as Literature**

From pedagogical training as a teacher of English Literature, I remember well the common justifications for literature as a subject in school. The most convincing apology was that literature develops the student's native capacities so that he might gain greater satisfaction from his personal reading, as well as be able to choose wisely, and evaluate intelligently, the material he reads in life outside of the classroom. Presumably, many of the acquired facts will be forgotten upon leaving school, while certain habits and methods which are related to aesthetics and good taste, such as are exhibited by an intelligent member of society, could be retained for life.

No doubt, there are other compelling reasons which may well legitimate literature as a compulsory area of study; however, they all have some relation to the actual life experience of students.

It, therefore, is perfectly natural that the founders of our educational system in the nineteenth century determined that literary study should involve those fields which characterized the literary situation of their time: reading good prose, reciting poetry, and viewing drama on stage. This did, indeed, characterize the literary life of people at that time and continued to do so well into the twentieth century. In my own youth, it was not uncommon for members of the family to spend evenings at home reading, and among more culturally oriented people, going to the theatre was a more-or-less regular, enriching experience, as were concerts, and perhaps even opera or ballet. But that was before electronic media, with all their complex social and psychological effects, propelled us all into a new age.

Today, these activities are still enjoyed by many, but every statistic indicates that the numbers of those who read novels and poetry or see theatre have declined; and that while the level of base literacy, as well as the leisure time for partaking in these activities, has increased dramatically. To judge by the number of volumes of

poetry sold annually, this pastime seems about as popular as falconry. Especially among members of the younger set, but even among the older generation, television, radio, and the movies have assumed the role of primary agents of culture and entertainment, taking the place formerly occupied by reading and theatre. Only blind traditionalists will bemoan this fact. Our age, like so many before it, has evolved its peculiar culture, along with its characteristic media and social patterns. Whether we endorse these developments is irrelevant. Historians of the future will have no alternative but to see our age as being culturally dominated by electronic media.

Yet I have the distinct impression that our literary educators in schools and universities are totally oblivious to this fact. Literature, as studied in our educational institutions, still consists essentially of reading and analyzing good prose, poetry and drama. In many instances, there is even an emphasis placed on anachronistic forms which are totally unrelated to the contemporary situation. It is difficult to dispel the suspicion that teachers are trying valiantly to keep alive or revive the old traditions, regardless of what damage might result from doing so.

Meanwhile, those who are reluctantly indoctrinated with the literature of the past are largely ignorant of the literary culture which they are subjected to outside of the classroom. While being able to discuss the structure of a Shakespearean drama which most of them will never see or read again outside of a formal educational setting, they have no concept of television dramaturgy. While having memorized the intricate pattern of a Petrarchan sonnet, they are unaware of the function of rhythm and imagery in the songs they listen to on records and radio. While analyzing characters and plots in lengthy novels, most of them are unable to verbalize on the movies they view. This is an example of rampant traditionalism; but, beyond that, it is a severe indictment of an educational system that neglects to educate people for meaningful participation in the culture of their time.

Because teaching professionals have failed to offer any value criteria, we have a population which only watches television at night, instead of consciously selecting a program for specific



reasons attributable only to the nature of the program. On the other hand, the media institutions, realizing that their audiences are not able to discriminate, feel authorized to offer pabulum and garbage on a regular basis. The electronic media of our time are the greatest potential cultural agents in the history of man, yet, because no one seems to know how to approach them knowledgeably, and no one even attempts to discuss or evaluate the programs they offer, the level of programming and partaking may be approaching that of primitive man.

Which is not to say that the media institutions offer only cheap entertainment. Certain radio and television stations, particularly the CBC and some educational or selective stations, offer quality programs regularly, and even the commercial stations do so occasionally. There can be little doubt that some of the best literature of our time, certainly the most representative, is to be found in the electronic media. But it is hardly an exaggeration to say that only a handful tune in to these programs. Most people lack the most elementary background to appreciate such cultural offerings and consequently show a preference for the monotonous and simplistic series which dominate television or for the sound effects on radio. Others would prefer better entertainment, but because there is no tradition of a selective viewing or listening, such information is not readily available.

The most appalling result of this is that people lose their sense of values as quickly as they can acquire them, and our media have already eroded some of our values. It is difficult to imagine, for example, that anyone would actually consider reading or attending in person, a performance of such tedious presentations as dominate the airwaves. This certainly also includes most of the students at every level, for their reading is generally superior to what they view on television. There can be little doubt that the educational process, particularly in the study of literature, profoundly affects our taste and selection of what we appreciate in our reading. However, it influences reading only; it does not persuade us to read instead of viewing or listening, and, since the nature of the activity seems totally unrelated to reading, it does not seem to have affected viewing habits. The viewing habits of our people are

totally unsophisticated, unaffected by education, and inconsistent with the good judgment and good taste they exhibit otherwise. The media institutions have been able to capitalize on this situation and have systematically nurtured a desire for cheap entertainment.

State control of the media could alleviate this situation, but whether it would improve it is to be doubted. State influence in the domain of culture is not always wholesome and may even do greater harm. But our educational system was specifically designed to prepare children for life – among other things, to develop their sense of values in cultural matters, and ultimately to teach them to prefer that which is better or more valuable. Yet here, in the most widespread and most influential cultural field, our educational system, the only institution which could teach us all to appreciate television, has not even attempted to offer any guidance.

The past 20 years of passive submission to programs that were not conceived with due regard for value criteria, and certainly not viewed in this manner, may have had an irreparable effect on the present generation – as studies and commissions into the influence of television are attesting relentlessly. Perhaps nothing short of state intervention will be able to alleviate the depravity of this generation with regard to their viewing habits. It was, after all, the first television generation, and the novelty of the medium may partially absolve educators of responsibility for having neglected to perform their social duty. However, there can be no excuse at this time if the educational institutions continue to persist in their disregard for the most potent cultural forces of our time and their representative literature.

The irony of this state of affairs is that our schools and universities have been equipped with sophisticated audio-visual equipment that is able to play, record, and replay virtually any program on the air, on tape, record, or film. So the possibilities are available, but they are utilized only for factual communication, if they are used at all. As for the students, there is every indication that they would respond more positively to contemporary media literature than to the books from the time of their grandparents. From this, it would seem that a certain amount of initiative and originality



is lacking on the part of our educators that keeps television and the related media arts from being taught and learned in our schools and universities. To do so is certainly no longer suspect on academic or pedagogical grounds, since European educational institutions have been teaching media literature for some time and an enormous number of dissertations and studies have been written on the subject.

In case this appeal is misunderstood, let me emphasize that I am not making a case for media study. The nature of the various media, their history and their effect on the population is a sociological concern which may also be of interest to many and has been dealt with quite successfully. What I envisage, and what some of us are implementing, is the study of radio and television as literature, subject to such criteria as have traditionally been applied to literary texts. Initially, this may be no more than a rather subjective evaluation of media programs, but this would be only a first step, which inevitably must be followed by analysis according to new criteria such as are applicable to new literary forms. Such endeavours may not be simple, but they are relevant, interesting and necessary.

*F. K. Jakobish,  
Professor,  
German Department*

## **The Corporation of the Town of Kapuskasing**

### **Commission Members:**

The Town of Kapuskasing welcomes the establishment of The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry, and hopes that your deliberations here today will, in some small but meaningful way, affect the content of your final recommendations to the Government of Ontario.

### **Rationale:**

Before dealing with the realities of violence in the communications industry, one must be able to define the impact of mass communications on today's society.

Certainly, all agree that the technical advances in the communications industry have revolutionized the patterns of our personal, moral and cultural lives. The national family life that you and I enjoyed in our early years has been drastically affected by an influx of international information. So much so, that no matter how tightly the modern family draws in on itself, the outer world – good and bad – cannot be left out. Television and other modern communications techniques are subjecting adults and children alike to a flood of external ideas and their long-term effects on the family institution are, and will remain for some time, very difficult to forecast. But slowly and surely the traditional family life values are and will be replaced with flexible alternatives to yesterday's welcomed isolation.

Similarly, education and the traditional learning processes have felt the impact of mass communications. Schools and curricula have had to adapt to pupils who are more informed, and who are spending more time before the television set than they are in school, and who have more information or at least more awareness at their fingertips than any previous generation in the history of mankind.

Present day statistics offer concluding proof of the impact of mass communications in everyone's daily life. A recent survey undertaken by the CBC<sup>1</sup> indicates that today 85 per cent of all Canadians watch television at some time during every day, that on the average Monday to Friday at 8:00

p.m. 83.0 per cent of all Canadians are watching television and that the average person spends three hours and four minutes a day watching effortlessly the intended message. Similar surveys indicate that the median time spent by adults reading newspapers is 52 minutes per day. Compounded daily, the average Canadian will hear about 11,000 pre-processed words daily.

Very few people will argue with the realities of these figures. The newspaper, paperback, radio and television explosion has become part of our environment. As such, these realities in many cases have added to our personal and cultural growth, with very positive results – because no one can negate the many redeeming values of mass communications. If well controlled, television can be a wonderful tool in a person's daily development. It can be for the young a great source of enjoyment and an effective means to increase the language development; for others, it can be a good relaxer after the pressures of a day at the office. Newspapers and magazines can also offer unprecedented educational and social advantages. A regular perusal of national and international news can and will foster a real understanding of the world that surrounds us.

As total as is its impact on today's society, this country's communications industry must play a responsible role in the distribution of information. Unfortunately, our communications and advertising media, as splendid as they may be, never cease to exploit young and old alike, without any regard to their welfare. In the name of competition and growth, major television networks are bombarding us with violence, real and imagined, all presented in the guise of entertainment. Parents and teachers alike complain increasingly that violence is too often used as a problem-solving device on television and in unscrupulous crime-laden newspapers. Through these media, actual or fictional assassinations and even bloodier scenes are projected in the tranquil world of children. Studies are proving that children who watch television violence behave afterward twice as aggressively as youngsters who are not exposed to such images, and that endless and uncensored hours of watching violent television shows will produce "increased alienation, indifference, antagonism and violence on the part of the younger

generations in all segments of our society".<sup>2</sup> While referring to media violence, Borden Spears, in an article published in *The Toronto Star*,<sup>3</sup> discusses four conclusions about which "there can no longer be any doubt":

1. There is an extremely high level of violence content in the media.
2. Exposing people to more and more violence results generally in increased aggressive behaviour.
3. Many people's attitudes have been warped by the violence they encounter in the media.
4. A significant number of persons have imitated the violence they have seen on the television or read about in the newspapers and books.

While admitting to these realities, publishers and program executives argue that the media must answer and cater to the wants of their customers, and that control is the responsibility of the viewer. Consequently, the impact of programs is judged by parents who unfortunately use the medium as an excellent babysitter, without realizing the full consequences felt by their children.

Faced with the irresponsibilities of both media executives and parents, it would seem that we can no longer afford unlimited freedom to permit questionable distribution of information. Some form of control must be undertaken by governmental agencies to protect man, his conduct and his culture. Thus the importance of your Commission.

### **Suggested Recommendations**

1. The genuine reporting of violence should be distinguished from violence presented in the guise of entertainment.
2. The reality and the reporting of violence in sports, especially hockey, should be controlled so that violent altercations are banned from television sets, and commentators should relate to the athletic qualities of players rather than their on-ice antics. Violent descriptive nicknames for some players, examples: Tiger, Hammer, Mad Dog, should not be published.
3. Certain hours should be reserved for family and children viewing. A 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. scheduling of such programs could enhance the

positive contribution of the televised message. Quiz shows, wildlife programs, documentaries could be excellent choices to provide entertainment and educational experiences.

4. Violence-related movies and programs should be clearly indicated to the television audience, and relegated to late night or early morning viewing.

5. *The National News* should seek a better balance in news reporting. Nothing can be so demoralizing than to be submitted to the realities of violence throughout the world.

6. Newspapers and magazines that glorify violence and violent people should be banned totally; example, the *Police Gazette*, *Allo Police*, et cetera.

7. Schools should be responsible to educate youngsters on means available to use the media to one's educational advantage.

8. Some agency should be established to regularly monitor the violence content of the media and perhaps annually call in those media groups that appear to be over-stressing violence. This type of monitoring and hearing attendance with public notice of same, would serve to make everyone conscious of the need to exercise restraint. Perhaps the Ontario Press Council could be used to monitor the printed media and the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission could serve the same function for radio and television.

These are but a few practical recommendations that could alleviate the potential dangers of over-exposure to violence in the communications industry. Certainly your Commission will be subjected to a number of these, which we hope will offer constructive suggestions on ways and means of countering any anticipated dangers.

Certainly our communications industry is a fantastic medium. It's our window on the world. But no one learns very much from the real world without help. And it is this help that the people of Kapuskasing are asking from the members of this Commission.

## Endnotes

- 1 *The Toronto Star* - Saturday, January 10, 1976, Page G1
- 2 *Human Behaviour - The Family*, Werwick, Robert, Page 117
- 3 *Toronto Star*, January 17, 1976, Page B-2

## Ellen Keetch, Thunder Bay

### Children and Television Violence

I teach developmental psychology for Confederation College. I am married and the mother of three young children. My husband and I were concerned about what seemed to be adverse affects of television and we banned it in our home for the last three months. We have now reinstated only the Saturday morning cartoons.

We have three daughters, an eight-year-old and five-year-old twins. We have always kept violence out-of-bounds for the children – that is, shows that we knew were violent. This, of course, was not a satisfactory approach because first, the so-called children's programs often contained very violent portions and secondly because we felt that television, especially for our eight-year-old, was over-stimulating. She started to become loud and silly and played poorly with her sisters, and the twins, instead of becoming over-stimulated, became simply mesmerized with television and didn't respond to calling and so on. To illustrate both of these points, the so-called children's programs containing violent portions: One example of this was seen on *Disneyland* – the legend of some swamp as I recall. It depicted an alcoholic father who was very cruel to his children and he mistreated them; whereas you did not see the actual slugging, he sort of grabbed the children and they were certainly in terror of him. The children were often hungry. There was one scene that terrified my children, in which these two boys were running after a possum which they had to catch for dinner and the younger child really risked his life by climbing up the tree to shake out the possum so his brother could shoot it. This was quite violent because you certainly saw the shooting of the possum. The children will not watch *Disneyland*. They like to watch it, but they want us to be with them.

The second example was shown on a fairly recent segment of *Little House on the Prairie*. The mother in this particular scene apparently got blood poisoning in her leg and became delirious with it and I think she lanced it with a butcher knife and one of the twins came to me terrified

because she thought she was going to cut her leg off. I really don't think this was family fare.

There has really been enough said already about cartoons, although in all fairness I must say that Saturday morning cartoons which show *Bugs Bunny* and the *Road Runner*, et cetera, do not seem to disturb the children – in fact, they laugh and I have not noticed them relating to these as being real life violence.

We turned off television with fear and trembling because we didn't know what to do as alternative recreation. We were delighted to find out we didn't have to. When the television was turned off the children found their own entertainment. There was very quickly a marked difference in the children's behaviour and it has improved – they play well together now. They are busy doing new things, they play outside more. They are much less noisy and my oldest daughter no longer has these silly spells she used to have. It seemed she had become quite aggressive from over-stimulation, not necessarily from violence. A rather good example of this is the show *Electric Company*. While I have not seen any violence on it, it is a show that has to really be kept off limits for children because it is so noisy and it seems the children are constantly barraged by all this noise and yelling and they immediately start responding. This would perhaps be violence to the senses – it doesn't come under the usual definition of violence.

Apologies for a lack of preparation.

*Ellen Keetch*

## Port Colbourne High School

This is the comparison of a number of reports written by both male and female teen-agers on the topic of violence and how it affects us through the media.

We thought perhaps that we would discover a great contrast between material written by opposite sexes but were surprised (though I don't know why) to find some definite agreement between the two.

We realize . . . we are vulnerable to all we see and read.

We have become insensitive to violence and that fact is creating some fear in all of us. We look upon the ideas the media sets before us as a possible solution to our problems.

Violence, I think, is a partially good and bad thing . . . it teaches you to watch out behind you without being aware of things around you . . .

It's all very exciting and sometimes amusing at someone's expense, but is it really necessary and could it possibly be damaging?

Evidence in this unofficial consensus shows that it is indeed quite damaging. We've even recognized some damage done to ourselves.

*Jennifer Parry, Sociology*  
*E. D. Rossi, History Head*

## R. W. Staples Nolalu

"Violence Just for Fun"

## G. Wayne Brown Sudbury

I have found that my children, when in grades seven and eight, were subjected to some of the displays of violence I have encountered. It was part of their "education".

One of the examples apparently was excerpts from World War II newsreels, which showed such items as Japanese soldiers disembowelling women and children. According to the principal, the children had the opportunity to avoid seeing the



film, but he admitted that the opportunity was more hypothetical than real . . .

We can turn off television (or not have it in our home), keep our children out of theatres, or restrict the range of reading material which we have in our home. Since we are compelled to send our children to school, we are in need of some mechanism so that they can avoid the compulsory viewing of such obscenities.

*G. Wayne Brown*

### **Mary Morrison Mississauga**

In pre-television years, children obtained their world view from the community in which they lived. Their ideas were based on contacts with real people, and probably further moulded by the views of their parents and teachers.

My hypothesis is that this gradual introduction to the outside world has been largely replaced by television, which brings to the young child a frightening portrayal of violence lacking in logical sequence or rational cause and effect, and that this contributes greatly to the general level of anxiety in the young child, who must feel very threatened in attempts to cope with such a world.

*Mary Morrison*

### **The Corporation of the City of Hamilton Status of Women Committee Hamilton**

Surely a low profile attitude toward the reporting of such crimes as vandalism, minor assault and petty robbery would not harm the right of people to know. With less publicity there just may be less chance of triggering others to gain similar attention.

*Mrs. O. Ritchie  
Chairperson*

### **The East Parry Sound Board of Education**

We strongly recommend that The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications

Industry recommend to the Government of Ontario a form of tax relief for advertisers choosing to sponsor family entertainment in the hours between 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. This could be in the form of a rebate of approximately ten per cent of the advertising rate.

*Thelma Blomme*

### **Jean Carruthers Kapuskaing**

The local station continually bombards the television audience with clips from the movies which will be appearing in the near future. These clips usually are excerpts portraying violent scenes which will be showing in the movie, and they also contain scenes in which two characters may be involved in verbal conflict as well as physical conflict.

*Jean Carruthers*

### **Big Brothers Association of Kitchener-Waterloo Inc. Kitchener**

Mental illness in Canada is still our number one health problem. To protect mentally sick adults and children, we have to discard the arguments about freedom of expression and liberty which are always thrown in our faces by those "artistic" individuals who make a mockery of our democratic way of life.

*Peter McGee  
Executive Director*

### **S. J. Wilson Waterloo**

In the absence of parental or peer-group models of behaviour, the media may be suggesting to children and youth that Canadian society values violent, emotionally charged behaviour. If this is so, are these the behaviours we want to encourage? Will these types of models interfere

with the accomplishment of our broader cultural goals?

*S. J. Wilson,  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
Wilfrid Laurier University  
Waterloo*

## **CKPR-TV Thunder Bay**

I do not care for exploitative media violence, but I care even less for institutional, bureaucratic censorship.

*Rebecca Johnson  
Chairman  
Advisory Committee*

## **Gibby Wright Ottawa**

First let me apologize for submitting this brief at such a late date, though I hope it may prove of some value.

On Wednesday, December 10th, (the date to the best of my recollection) I arrived at the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Detention Centre on Innes Road for the purpose of teaching a yoga class. It was about eight o'clock in the evening and the Columbia film *The New Centurions* was being shown in the cafeteria.

The first scene to greet my eyes was that of George C. Scott as police chief, finishing a telephone call then removing a loaded revolver from his desk drawer, inserting the muzzle in his throat, pulling the trigger and blowing his head off.

Astonished, I asked the guard nearest to me if there were any restrictions on content, as one scene of violence followed another. His reply was vague or a shrug, if my memory serves me correctly. Two or three nights later on either Friday, December 12th or Saturday, December 13th, upon my arrival in the cafeteria, a man and woman were shown on the screen together before or after intercourse. The film was called *Three Tough Guys* and, when I inquired of a nearby official if the films went before a selection

committee or something of that nature, he replied that "They just can't show anything with sex or violence in it". I left the cafeteria to continue with my yoga class at that point. However, during the few minutes I was there – possibly 15 or 20 minutes at the most as a total time for both *The New Centurions* and *Three Tough Guys* – I saw little else but sex and violence including:

1. A gang fight consisting of a variety of weapons, such as two-by-fours and whatever else was handy, including guns and, as a last resort, fists and feet being used with extremely injurious intention by one human being upon another. As the police arrived, the general melee dispersed complete with flying tackle arrests by the officers of the law. One gang member escaped firing several shots at his police pursuer during an extremely tense five minute drama of hide-and-seek. He finally got away, so the frustrated cop took out his frustrations by bashing out the windows of the hood's car in a fit of uncontrollable rage while his fellow officers stood by mildly reprimanding him but never restraining him from committing such an illegal act of destruction against private property. This scene was received with applause, cheers of disdain and a general mood acknowledging among themselves that police were more than capable of breaking the law, perhaps more freely and arrogantly than the luckless inmates of the jail who had no recourse such as a badge, uniform and status as law enforcer to keep them from the easily deceived eye of justice.
2. Further scenes followed, involving a cop getting drunk on the job, keeping a pint of liquor inside a police telephone call box.
3. Going after a provocatively dressed woman and pleading with her for mercy as she drove at breakneck speed through traffic while he helplessly held on to her car door until she slowed down enough that he could let go. Let's say that she exposed him to a wide range of physically unpleasant stimuli in the form of blinking upright caution signs and white picket fences during this adrenalin-filled three or four-minute segment. For anyone unfamiliar with *The New Centurions* I

could round things out by saying that the same officer and chief player of the last part of the film was shot to death by a madman in the final scene. I don't feel I can speak for the other viewers, but I noted that my own physical condition had altered into an unpleasantly agitated physical state including faster heartbeat and breathing and accompanying overall muscular tension and nervous agitation. The flow of thoughts through my mind increased and they became paranoid-aggressive in nature. There was a general adrenalin flush to my entire physical apparatus and an urge for activity. The time was approximately 9 p.m. and the inmates would be preparing to go to their dorms and to bed within an hour.

I leave you to arrive at any further conclusions.

*Gibby Wright*

### **Baha'i Community of Lucerne Aylmer, Quebec**

With the advancement of civilization, man has found a stranger in his home over whose content he has little control – that is the mass media, particularly television. It presents whatever satisfies the interests of people in material terms and gives very limited insight into the development of human virtues and understanding of the reality of man's own self and realization of his fate on this earth. Observation of violent behaviour can stimulate an appetite for emotional satisfaction and contribute to learning aggressive acting out. Children, by their natural curiosity, are particularly influenced by television, which is an effective teacher.

*Dr. A. M. Ghadirian*

### **Ontario Library Association Toronto**

Violence per se cannot be viewed as intrinsically offensive. Rather, violence must be seen as

another human trait and therefore a legitimate topic for artistic treatment in any medium.

*L. A. Moore, President*

### **Mayor of Windsor's Ad Hoc Committee on Violence in the Windsor Community**

We are aware that crime data reveal that, while fluctuations from year to year are apparent for reported crime, it is obvious that per capita crime and violent behaviour in our society is increasing; a review of data in larger time blocks rather than from one year to the next supports this conviction. And it is also apparent that the age level of those who are committing violent crimes in this community is dropping – that is, violent criminal behaviour is not, and has not been for many years, the prerogative of adults. When age groups are examined, it becomes clear that the early teen to the early twenties group performs the vast majority of violent crimes in our society.

*Walt Romanow, Chairman*

### **The Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board Principals' Association**

People are concerned about what will be done after the Royal Commission completes its report. We frequently heard, at public meetings we attended and on a local radio open-line program, scepticism regarding the ability of the Commission to aid in producing any direct results. This unfortunate attitude prevailed in many private conversations which broached this subject. People are negative about the role of most public commissions, viewing them solely as political ploys, their only function being to provide an outlet for frustrations and concerns after which all the material is shelved to gather dust (a phrase we often heard). Local media outlets, as well, have indicated similar opinion regarding the Commission. We are interested, concerned educators and parents. We have collected an overwhelming response from different individuals to present to

the Commission. Even though we have been criticized by the media as being hopelessly biased, despite local editorials from media personnel defaming both the purpose and function of your Commission and its personnel, we present to you a mass of information from citizens in this community, who feel strongly enough about this subject to respond individually to you, with the hope that something will be done. Ninety per cent of our respondents show a deep concern for this. They also say there is a problem. We present to you their problems, we leave further, detailed solutions to you to work out. People have a lot to say about this. Let's face it, Royal Commission, we feel you're about all we've got right now to help us with this media violence. Give it your best shot!

*Jim Griffin,  
Principal,  
Immaculate Conception School,  
Val Caron*

*Larry McChesney,  
Principal,  
St. Michael School,  
Sudbury*

*Ray Lyons,  
Principal,  
St. Theresa School,  
Sudbury*

### **The Rev. C. Gordon Ross The North Bay Ministerial Association**

We do not believe that self-regulation by the industry will prove to be a feasible solution to the problem. The media performance of the past would seem to indicate that its self-interest is in conflict with the public interest on this question. Accordingly, it would seem that some form of public regulation by a public authority operating under well-defined principles will be necessary if the problem is to be corrected in a way that is likely to meet the need of the public for a more balanced and responsible form of television programming.

*The Rev. C. Gordon Ross*

### **Central Neighbourhood House Toronto**

We cannot trace a clear cause and effect from seeing violence to the violent acts in our midst. However, we have seen that violence builds on a problem that already exists. When a child, a teen or an adult is feeling frustrated, is angry, or has a low self-image, he has a fund of images of how his television heroes get relief. We can call on a repertoire of violent acts with which to express ourselves, inviting similar "unreal" responses, all of which are not constructive elements in the expression of our frustration and anger.

*Jeanne Rowles  
Executive Director*

### **Rachel Haight Ottawa**

To approve of censorship is to ally oneself with the fools and cowards. May I point out that, outside of official bodies established for the purpose of censorship, we already have a powerful, subtle and unrecognized censorship in effect in all media? It is a censorship exercised without regard to its effects on human life and conduct, without regard to values necessary in civilized society, a censorship effected by those who, for monetary profit or the enhancement of power, are able to produce mindless words and pictures in endless quantity. By flooding the bookstalls, the cinemas and the broadcasting screens and microphones with material which neither illuminates nor educates, nor truly entertains, true communication between people is discouraged by the difficulty of competing financially with the mass media, and by dulling the appetite so that discrimination and true enjoyment are no longer possible. The dilemma leads far beyond consideration of whether to appoint a board of censors or not, but because the disease is grave and treatment difficult, there is no reason not to seek a remedy.

I hope the Royal Commission can convince the media and the public that the unfettered presentation of violence in all its forms, physical or psychological tends to promote the assumption



that “normal” people commonly engage in violent behaviour without restraint. It provides food for the imagination of how to act out our aggressions and increases the range of aggressive behaviour. It suggests that if all the world behaves thus, why not I?

Children of all ages are influenced by what they see and hear. If it were not so, why send us to school?

However it is to be accomplished, violence (and sex, the other current obsession) should be presented not for themselves, more or less isolated, but as part of human nature in all its complexity.

*Dr. Rachel K. Haight*

## **The Chronicle-Journal, The Times-News Thunder Bay**

*The Chronicle-Journal* (evening) and *The Times-News* (morning) have a combined daily paid circulation of some 34,500 copies. The two newspapers serve distinctly different readers.

*The Chronicle-Journal* derives over 90 per cent of its total circulation of 27,000 from the City of Thunder Bay. *The Times-News* serves North-western Ontario, from the Manitoba border as far east as Wawa. More than 70 per cent of this newspaper's circulation of 7,500 is in areas outside the City of Thunder Bay.

The news staffs of the two newspapers are largely separate. Each has its own editorial page editor. In addition to its full-time staff, *The Times-News* draws on over 450 correspondents located throughout Northwestern Ontario.

Thomson Newspapers Limited, which owns both newspapers, pursues a policy of editorial independence for its publishers. The views expressed in this presentation apply only to the policies and practices of *The Chronicle-Journal* and *The Times-News*.

Several aspects of the Commission's Interim Report dated January 1976, strike the reader rather forcibly.

First, it appears that the Commission may have narrowed its mandate prematurely. Its terms of reference include a study of “the effects on society of the increasing exhibition of violence in the communications industry”. In the text of its Interim Report (I - 3) this has become a study of “the possible harm to the public interest of the increasing exploitation of violence” in the media. There is a vast difference.

Second, in my opinion, the Interim Report does not make sufficient distinction between media handling of real news events which are violent in nature and of fictional violence expressly created as entertainment – the latter being exclusive to the electronic media, television and movies in particular. Thus, criticism of fictional violence as television entertainment is often stated in terms which can only be read as criticism applicable to the media in general, including daily newspapers.

I would hope that this blurring of focus will not carry through into subsequent reports.

Third, the Report states (III - 19) that "some newspapers appear to use violence as a competitive marketing strategy" and that content priorities are set "to a large extent according to commercial consideration . . . Violent news may also be greater commercial success than other kinds" (III - 19 and 20). In other words, the Commission seems to hold the opinion that responsible newspapers will publish anything to make a buck. If I were to propose such crass policies to the editorial staffs of the Thunder Bay newspapers they would be justified in asking for my head. Furthermore, I firmly believe that readers would rightly desert our newspapers in large numbers if we were to set out to exploit violence in the news, for whatever reason.

Having said this, I believe that excessive exposure to violence, whether in the news or elsewhere, can affect (in the words of your Interim Report) "our natural aversion and sensitivity to violence".

Perhaps this Royal Commission will prove beneficial if it only brings the media to once again look in the mirror.

It would be ludicrous for *The Chronicle-Journal* and *The Times-News* to waste valuable space by playing up news of violent events. Our overlying priorities must be to define and report on the almost overwhelming array of fundamental issues facing Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario. The region is at the crossroads and an informed citizenry is essential to its future. Urban development, waterfront restoration, harbour development, electoral systems and representation, zoning, water quality, industrial development, health services, communications networks, new townsites, the environment, the quality of life all cry out for intelligent news reporting.

Additionally, our readers have confirmed that they do not rate violence (as reflected in news of crime and the courts) very high on their list of needs. Last summer, 260 readers of *The Times-News* were asked (among other things) what kinds of news they would like to see more of. They want more district and regional news (58 per cent of respondents) Canadian news (57 per cent) and Community news (51 per cent). News of crime

and the courts ranked eleventh (only 31 per cent of respondents wanted more).

This does not mean that *The Chronicle-Journal* and *The Times-News* withhold publication of news of violent events; what it does mean is that we will not exploit it. The question as I see it is not whether to cover news of violent events, but, rather, how best to handle it.

I should note in passing that *The Chronicle-Journal* and *The Times-News* should not be held accountable for the way news of violent events is (or is not) exploited by local radio and television stations even if, as often appears the case, the newscaster is reading from these newspapers.

In discussing real news of violent events, I think it is useful and necessary to distinguish between mass violence and individual acts of violence.

It should be questioned whether news of mass violence is desensitizing in the long run or whether it has the reverse effect and creates reactions of distaste and horror. Taking news of the murderous religious warfare in Northern Ireland as an example, I think that the latter is undoubtedly the case. It could be that the public is capable of greater discernment and common sense than is often thought possible.

In the handling of news of individual acts of violence, violence in the course of protest, accidental violence and criminal violence each pose different questions. Some examples may help to illustrate this.

Recently we began to receive indications of unrest at the Thunder Bay District Jail in the form of anonymous letters from prisoners and telephone calls from their friends on the outside. Our efforts to follow these leads were not too successful; officials at the jail were reticent and refused our reporters access to the jail. Eventually, violence erupted at the jail. At our request, a local member of the provincial Parliament sought and was granted access to the jail and was interviewed by us. Subsequently members of the Ontario Ombudsman's staff also toured the jail. What came to light was serious overcrowding at the jail due, in large measure, to the number of prisoners held for lengthy periods while their cases were remanded time and again. Both the federal and provincial governments will be introducing

measures to speed up the judicial processes. I believe that news reports of the unrest at the district jail here and at jails elsewhere has resulted in the introduction of these corrective measures. Others, however, would like to believe that the reporting of unrest in these jails was a cause of the acts of violence that occurred. I do not agree with them.

We report regularly (but usually in synoptic fashion) news of accidental deaths such as hunting accidents, snowmobile accidents, traffic accidents, deaths by drowning. I believe that this reporting provides the public with essential information in the sense that, alerted to a risk, precautions can be taken.

Reporting of criminal violence presents the area where judgmental considerations are perhaps the greatest. The "right to know" of the public cannot be used as a cloak for a licence to publish, regardless of the public welfare or of the personal injuries that may be inflicted. Striking the right balance can often be difficult. In such cases, we try to stay open to feedback from the public at large and from those who, however peripherally, could be affected by our news reports. A case in point is a recent local case of alleged rape. This is still before the courts, so all I can say is that the feedback on our coverage of the trial has resulted in modifications to our policies.

You may be interested in some of the ways in which *The Chronicle-Journal* and *The Times-News* are involved in the communities they serve. In our editorials we have been and will continue to be outspoken in our condemnation of violence – in particular violence in sports such as hockey, where the young tend to find their behavioural models. Opinion-makers from educators to environmentalists, to the chiefs of Indian bands, have been invited to make use of our editorial columns without fear of editing on our part. Our newspapers have been introduced into classrooms in city schools as an educational aid, particularly in the teaching of reading skills. We are constantly seeking local people with talent, as evidenced in our locally-created cartoons, book reviews, children's column and political commentary. We go out of our way to encourage letters to the editor. Additionally, we plan to introduce a column of "Instant Opinions" received by

telephone, to provide our readers with an easy way to get their opinions on important issues published. We are giving thought to publishing a series of articles which would explain our policies and practices, in an attempt to humanize the "ivory tower".

In its Interim Report, the Commission indicates that it will be considering whether or not there exists a need for governmental control over what it refers to as "media violence". Let me state in the strongest possible terms that I would be dead against governmental interference in the reporting of news events. Such interference can lead all too readily to a muzzling of the media for political purposes. India is a sad example. Closer to home, the simplistic idea of "Canadianizing" magazines has floundered on the rocks of confusion and bitter dissension. I hope it is obvious that I believe the media's right to publish the news must be accompanied by a sense of the highest responsibility. We indeed are fortunate in Canada to have a long tradition of this kind of responsibility. The excesses of a few should not be exploited as an excuse to muzzle the whole.

It would seem to me that this Commission could enter the annals of history by concentrating its attention on fictional violence created expressly for the purpose of entertainment, particularly as now evidenced in television police and crime programs and in motion pictures. In this latter connection I would cite the (American) film *A Clockwork Orange* as an example of gross exploitation of senseless violence.

On a positive note, this Commission could provide a lasting service to Northwestern Ontario by urging the revival of the proposed educational television network to bring news and non-violent entertainment to vast areas of the province.

*J. Peter Kohl*  
Publisher

## William M. Bean Thunder Bay

When I learned that Ontario had struck this Commission, I was eager to make a submission.

I was eager because first, I am a media consumer – I devour newspapers and magazines, listen to radios wherever I might be and am a television fanatic. But I am more than a consumer. I am a producer, as an editor with the local daily newspaper, *The Chronicle-Journal*.

(I must very clearly state that I am in no way speaking for the newspaper, or even the editorial employees of it. I am speaking in this submission from my own viewpoint as a person who is daily involved in producing and consuming news.)

I was happy to see that public focus had once again been drawn to the media, which are becoming increasingly an important part of the average citizen's daily life. But I was alarmed at the reason for the Commission, or at least for the apparent reason. It seemed to be a reaction to several violent events which occurred in the past year, and it seemed to be a reaction to them rather than part of an ongoing public and government concern.

I became very afraid that this reaction might manifest itself in some form of government news management or censorship of films and television, and so decided to submit this brief.

I thank you for your attention, and hope I am some help in this study.

As a media consumer, I am frequently offended by the brutality in television entertainment programming and in films, but am less offended by the brutality of news reports on the radio or in newspapers.

Film and television have been called "cool" because little involvement is required to complete the information input. Everything is laid before the viewer to absorb with little effort.

I'd rather think of them as the "hot" media, because, while there is little involvement needed to complete the input, all the information, in the visual sense, is there. You can watch the earthquake shatter homes, you can watch the dead sniper dragged out of his sniper's nest. Newspaper and radio reports can give you some of this, but the audio-visual media have the greater impact.

Very frequently, I have been offended by the depiction of violence in a film. It is a simple matter for me to leave such a film.

I read movie reviews and watch promotional material to determine if the film contains a degree of violence which I would find offensive.

If it seems the film will feature a degree of violence which I would not find entertaining, I avoid the film. It's a fairly simple system, one that any consumer could use, and of course is used by many filmgoers, but with different criteria for different types of films. But it doesn't always work.

I use somewhat the same system for television. In many parts of the country, it is very easy to "leave the theatre" with a simple flick of the dial.

I can honestly say I have not seen a television program which I would consider offensively violent, and I am not unfamiliar with television.

I was watching television practically as soon as I was able to turn the dial, and grew up on the antics of *The Three Stooges* and *Tom and Jerry* – two targets in recent years of parents wishing to protect their children from violence.

I do not think that this "violence" has had an adverse effect on me. I do not smash cats on their heads with large wooden mallets and I do not poke bald-headed men in their eyes. I know that my friends and relations don't.

But much of the blame for an increasing number of crimes of violence is being laid on this sort of television programming, and, to a lesser extent, on films.

The critics say that the public is using the violence on the screen as a model for their own behaviour.

Quite regularly, some crime – a jail-break or theft, for example – is linked to a film or television series by an official who says the *modus operandi* was borrowed from a script-writer.

I don't know if there is an answer to this chicken-and-egg controversy, but I do doubt that films and television programs would incite persons, who would not otherwise express themselves in terms of violence, to commit violent acts.

What I have been talking about is the violence in fiction and in dramatization of real events.

There is also another form for the conveyance of violent acts – coverage of news events.



Television, radio, newspapers and magazines are, to varying extents, involved in the dissemination of news. (For the purpose of the discussion, let the word news include special broadcasts of events, coverage of sports events, regular television and radio newscasts and news content of newspapers and magazines.)

Here, the electronic media take much of the criticism, but the print media, newspapers especially, are not exempt.

The premise seems to be that news reports of crimes cause persons to commit crimes themselves, the most cited proof being the Brampton-Ottawa shootings with which you are now probably well versed.

I reject this premise. It makes the press (if you will allow this term to extend to the editorial capacities of the media) sound like a massive crime comic. Some persons seem to think that the press exploits violence to attract an audience.

Are “screaming headlines” a response to reader demand, or an attempt to stimulate it? First, let me say that I think the press in Canada takes a very sober view of news. The “screaming headlines” of scandal-sheet fame are used, largely, by scandal sheets. Many Canadian newspapers use large display type for newspapers, but the biggest headlines seem to go to stories of the “Nixon Quits” class. (I wonder if such headlines would incite other Presidents to quit?)

I believe that the prominence given a story is in direct proportion to the number of people who are or may be interested in it. An editor sees a story, he weighs its importance, consults with his peers or superiors, then places the story in the first minute of the newscast or the last page of the newspaper.

Stories of violence are often prominently featured because they are acts beyond the bounds of social order. They represent attacks on human dignity and social values, and sufficient recognition of their occurrence and importance is vital.

Stories of swindles of government agencies, tax evasions, misuses of political or judicial powers, acts of bribery and other non-violent crimes (that is, physically non-injurious), receive a prominence that I feel is equal to that of violent crimes.

News of a non-criminal nature, such as throne

speeches, tax rates, new subdivisions, medical breakthroughs and so on, is reported as well.

A prominent position in a daily radio newscast could feature a cabinet Green Paper Monday, a hijacking Tuesday and approval of a building project (bridge, city hall) Wednesday.

I don’t believe there is a conscious effort on the part of the press to give undue attention to crime stories. I do believe that crime stories can achieve prominence because a specific crime story may be the best news story of the day.

I feel that the press, when it is doing its job well, is telling the public what is happening in this country and the world.

I am sure that you are familiar with volume three of the *Senate Report on the Mass Media*. It is my impression that the people surveyed felt the media (that is, the editorial side of the media) were doing a good job. I hope that is what this Commission finds.

The purpose of this Commission is, among other things, “to determine whether there is any connection between it (violence depicted in the media) and the incidence of violent crimes in society.” I believe there is a connection, as far as the editorial side of things is concerned – a violent crime occurs and the media reports it, giving the act the prominence it deserves whether that be three paragraphs on page 15 or 400 words on Page One (please forgive the newspaper examples – it is the medium with which I am most familiar).

I am very much afraid that there are some people who do not believe this, who believe that the rising incidence of violent crime is the result of media reportage rather than the result of economic instability, technological change or the dehumanization that seems to come with urban life.

I think that basically, people still prefer to shoot the messenger, and I wonder if this Commission is a first step toward deciding how to go about shooting the messenger – or how to go about muzzling him at least.

One aim of this Commission is “to make necessary and appropriate recommendations on what measures could be taken by the Province of Ontario, by other levels of government, by the general public and by the communications industry.” I very much fear the possibilities in

those “measures” which could be taken. I’m sure you’ve had enough cries of “freedom of the press” that your ears are dull to them now. Let me say that, as a consumer and a member of the media, I am not totally against intervention by government in the business side of the media, but I am unnerved by indications that government may try to hold sway in the newsrooms.

I have come to feel that this Commission may be a trial balloon toward such a move.

I object in the strongest possible terms to direct intervention in the editorial content of the media, especially if it might mean that editorial decision-making would be placed in the hands of government administrators.

I would support government moves to encourage the development of self-regulating agencies – such as community press councils – but oppose any direct moves into newsrooms.

I think the public would agree. Going back to volume three of the mass media study, the Report notes that 78 per cent of the Ontario participants in the survey said they feel the media do not have too much freedom, and the majority of the Ontario participants felt government has gone far enough in its control of the media. There was a nearly even division on the subject of censorship, except as applies to television, where 78 per cent of the participants wanted more censorship. (But to speak in defence of television for a moment, the participants in the survey overwhelmingly identified television as the medium that allowed them to see life as others see it, and the easiest medium from which to learn.)

I have already said that violence is a fact. The elimination of violence can not be accomplished merely through censorship, and I believe that this course would do little to reduce it. There must be some basic changes in people and their environment before this can be brought about.

Would the government consider any form of direct news management as a “measure” necessary to stem the violence in society?

The creation of this Commission must be some indication of the intention of government. Censorship, in even a “partial” form (which is not partial at all, of course) is unacceptable to me.

But I do feel there are direct methods that might be acceptable, and I have already suggested them.

If this Commission is truly a reflection of popular opinion and desire, it might mean that the public is less familiar than it should be with the editorial workings of the media. It must also be an indication that the conventional methods open for the private person to express his dissatisfaction with the press are not working.

Crimes of violence get the prominence they do because an editor considers the stories have a high degree of community interest.

Maybe they don’t.

I would reject any government attempt to decide what news is of community interest, but would favour allowing the community to say what is interesting to it.

This community input could take the form of a community advisory council, with representatives from all the media and various citizens, either individuals or representatives of groups.

I would favour government support, possibly through tax incentives, to media that participate in such councils – or perhaps tax disincentives to those who don’t.

As well, I think the extension of the Ontario Press Council to all newspapers in Ontario and to all broadcast outlets would be valuable.

The Council would be a last resort for the citizen who has a complaint against the media, but cannot get satisfaction through the conventional channels.

Bearing in mind that there are nearly 200 broadcasting outlets and daily newspapers in Ontario, regional press councils, operating under the umbrella of the provincial body, might be in order.

Hearings into citizen complaints would be submitted to a central council and would be published in booklet form for distribution to participating citizen groups and media members, as well as being publicized in the news columns or newscasts of the media concerned.

Again, tax incentives or disincentives could be applied to encourage these councils.

Community input of advisory boards and the self-regulation of press councils would do more than deal solely with the question of violence of course. The efforts of such groups would improve the overall quality of the news.

These are some suggestions for the editorial side of the media, what about the entertainment side?

I have already made one suggestion regarding television programming – let the viewer change the channel. In most Ontario communities, the viewer has a choice between two Canadian television stations. In some areas, especially the Golden Horseshoe, viewers have a wide variety of Canadian and American programming from which to choose.

Here in the North, the selection is not so wide. I believe one of the recommendations of this Commission should be that the federal agencies involved do all possible to speed the extension of second television services to these communities now served only by the CBC.

I wish also that the Commission could somehow make it clear to the public that television viewing is not a requisite to survival – it can be turned off without fatal results to the viewer.

I would also suggest a more advanced – not restrictive – form of movie classification, so the filmgoer better understands what he is going to see. Rate films according to the percentage of the film featuring sex or violence. For example, on a scale of one to five, a film rated at four might feature violent scenes for between 50 per cent and 70 per cent of the film's running time. Such a film might be classed as Four-V.

I'm not sure if this is the method of implementation, but I think you can see what I'm driving at.

As a consumer, I'd like a choice in my entertainment viewing. I can change the channel on my television, in this city at least, but a cinema is a sort of monopoly in that once you've paid your ten dollars for refreshments and admission, you're stuck.

A filmgoer already knows if the film he is going to see is the type of film – western, drama, police story, comedy or musical – he is interested in by the promotional material. Scenes involving sex and violence can contribute to a film, but views may vary on the degree.

If the consumer could know beforehand, or at least have an idea beforehand, what the degree is, then he would be better equipped to choose. If the public really doesn't want to see films of violence, the filmgoers will stay away in droves and the source of the "problem" will dry up.

I think that I must here rest my "case". I repeat that I, as a media consumer and a member of the media, object to any thought, no matter how small, of further government intervention in the management of news (I say "further" because, of course, government has already restricted the newsgathering aspect in terms of libel, obscenity and municipal coverage).

I am glad to see another public examination of the quality of news coverage, but am sorry that it comes, or at least appears to come, as the result of a series of events over a short period of time, rather than as a result of an ongoing concern for the quality of information the public receives through the media.

I hope the recommendations of the Commission reflect a long-term view rather than a short-term reaction.

*William M. Bean*

**International Centre  
Queen's University  
Kingston, Ontario**

I cannot see a case for any censorship in Ontario, whether it be of the sex or violence (the two favourites of those who protect us from viewing moral turpitude). For example, to me the Academy Award-winning film *Jaws* is truly an obscenity in the worst sense of that word. While I haven't seen *Last Tango in Paris*, what I do know of it would indicate that I would not find my psyche so fundamentally violated as it was by *Jaws*, a film recommended for kids! Similarly, I haven't seen *Deep Throat* (for obvious reasons), but what I know of it suggests a great deal of quite harmless humour, as opposed to a drive-in style film recently playing in Canada called *The Texas Chain-Saw Massacre*. How could anyone with a social conscience and in their right mind ban the former, yet allow the latter for family evening viewing? Censorship will always be invalid since it must make value judgments based on the limited experience and insights of a few people.

...Violence in the media is a non-issue; what matters is how we handle it as a society. A fundamental approach to handling such media programs should be inaugurated from the earliest years of schooling in our educational system. Values, education, together with critical evaluation of media, advertising, all those harsh realities of daily life, should be examined in the school curriculum. It is only in this fashion that we will propagate healthy attitudes, examine our social priorities, and fulfil our obligations to the rest of mankind.

*Kaspar Pold, Executive Secretary*

**Canadian Association  
of Chiefs of Police  
Ottawa**

We deplore the way many programs bring firearms into play. Whereas Westerns of some historical value should be shown precisely for that, the modern versions leave much to be desired. Insofar as police programs are concerned, there is no doubt a growing interest by the community in police operations but a comparison between the program mentioned above and *The Collaborators*, emphasizing forensic science, can maintain high interest without the violent aspect. Even the use of firearms on television would have a less impressionable effect if the firing of the shot and the viewing of a killing or a wounding were omitted.

Scripting would have an awful lot to do with it also inasmuch as the justification of an individual using a firearm improperly has an equally nefarious effect.

*Bernard E. Poirier, Executive Director*



## Fort Frances Ministerial Association

The day I disposed of our television set was the first day in five years that no one was killed in our living room: no sirens screamed, no shots rang out, no artificially dubbed-in merriment told us when we had to laugh at what inanities, and no one slashed, elbowed, tripped, hit or tackled any one else.

We had been in a northern settlement without television coverage for a number of years, and, after coming back to more accessible parts, had once again made the experiment to see if television had something to offer our family. We abandoned it after four years when we found that the few good programs were completely outweighed by the poor ones; and, O happy day, gone now are the anguished protests from the young whenever parents would turn off undesirable programs; conversation and discussions are the rule instead of the exception and help us to stay abreast of national and international affairs quite well; books, records and piano are used with delight, and our baby will never be told “go watch television, I’m busy,” or be assaulted with numbers, letters or other images flying at him from *Sesame Street*.

With the happy inconsistency so frequently characteristic of inter-denominational groups, the Fort Frances Ministerial Association requested that this particular brief be prepared by its one member who disposed of his television set some years ago. The above paragraph, consequently, is entirely his own.

It would be presumptuous on his part to claim he is up to date on the latest developments in the matter of television, and it is equally unnecessary at this point to quote reports or cite statistics compiled by experts in various fields, all of which will already be in the hands of the Commission, and in far more complete form than we in this small town could hope to gather and compile. Added to this is that always surprising fact that those whose profession it is to relate to Eternity are continually under the pressure of time and can spend only a limited amount of this precious commodity on meetings and preparing submissions.

It may therefore be permissible to confine

ourselves to a number of general considerations. While each of the members of this Association would emphasize some matters more than others, we are in general agreement with the opinions expressed in this brief.

### Television

Rather than cite the incidence of violence on television, or the specific programs in which it occurs, we may state the view that the medium itself is aggressive and frequently violent: sound and images are thrown at the viewer, designed to catch and hold his interest in the most compelling way possible. A way, incidentally, completely different than that of a book.

Perhaps too much is made of the violence of the content and not enough of the violence inherent in the medium itself. And, as so often occurs, the medium ever strives to become the master, and to control and dominate the viewer – a process already well on its way in many Canadian families.

We may well question the idea continually implanted in young minds by the very format of the programming: that all of life’s problems – criminal, medical, social and marital – are capable of being presented, considered and solved in half an hour, or an hour at most, with time out for commercials.

We also raise the question whether television might dull the minds of the viewers to such an extent that, accustomed as they are to watch violence from comfortable positions in pleasantly furnished rooms, surrounded by beer, pop, potato chips or whatever else is said to be essential to the good life, they do not really react anymore when they see it in actual situations. As an example we may quote here the comments of a Toronto bus driver who was savagely beaten by some young thugs on April 18, 1975, while some 90 passengers watched without coming to the rescue: “They just looked at me as if they were watching a fight on television – not a single person would make a move.”

(Whether violence in cartoons is actually so damaging is a subject best left to properly qualified researchers. Perhaps too much is being made of this. The coyote on the *Roadrunner* show

is generally held up as an example, for few creatures suffer the disasters that inevitably come his way, yet there is also the often neglected point that here is one who is as indestructible as the *Roadrunner* is uncatchable. After each episode he rises from being totally crushed, mangled or otherwise flattened out, without so much as a scratch, a limp, or a bandaid showing. He is continually rising from the dead and with unquenchable determination pursues his quest for the impossible dream.)

However, we do question the suitability of a four-hour television film on the Manson family murders (*The Globe and Mail*, January 8, 1976). If there is any sociological value for a study of this matter, surely it should be restricted to those who pursue the disciplines of criminal psychology, and there is no reason to present this to the public at large.

### Radio

Once again we note the medium is aggressive and geared to make a constant assault on the hearer, whether by the sheer noise of the rock sounds, the unnaturally pitched announcers' voices, or the commercial messages. It is a sad commentary on our times that even announcements of sales of such peaceful articles as babies' training pants are thrown at us with an intensity normally expected among a group of terrorists on a suicidal attack.

The demise of many FM radio stations that hitherto specialized in the presentation of classical music, and their changing over to staccato news reports or talk shows to assault the ears and sensibilities of the hearers, is another illustration that there will be no peace for the wicked.

### Press

It is a well-known phenomenon that a certain correspondence exists between, say, a spectacular skyjacking (the incident with the parachute comes to mind), a prison escape or other crime, and subsequent attempts to duplicate this particular feat.

Reporting of any kind of violence often appears to bring other similar acts in its train, or else evoke (as did the bombing at La Guardia airport), numbers of crank calls and false threats.

Certain crimes, perhaps particularly sexual ones, appeal to certain people, and their unstable mental condition is certainly not strengthened toward improvement by the "reporting-in-depth" as presently practised. Perhaps it is time for newspaper and magazine editors to exercise a certain restraint in the reporting of these crimes, particularly in the details which are not necessary to an apprehension of the basic facts.

The reporting of violence, revolting crimes and terrorist acts is of course an inescapable feature in a violent society, and censorship of the press would be very difficult to establish. We shall have to endure until such time editors and producers show more concern for ethics and less for profits.

Once again, we draw attention to the fact that the medium can be as violent as the content: the headlines, the subheadings and the reporting itself can assault the reader in numerous ways.

Even reports in the media of ridiculously light sentences or acquittals for those convicted of violent crimes, whether murder, rape or assault, may well encourage others to the conclusion that crime, after all, does pay. Examples of this can be found in the daily papers and properly belongs to a study on crime, but the absence of editorial comments makes us wonder.

Furthermore, persons who have embraced violence as a way of life are often pictured in flattering if not heroic terms. Note that few papers speak of "accused terrorist Miss Hearst" – it is nearly always "Patty Hearst," or even "Patty," a term of endearment which evokes sympathy rather than a dispassionate view. Likewise it was "Squeaky" Fromme, rather than Miss Lynette Fromme. In this way the media can, and all too often do, play a particularly insidious role in the glorification of personages who in many cases are common criminals.

### General

It appears somewhat remarkable that, in days when the communications industry covers nearly every point on earth and every one is engaged in frantic communication with one another, no one seems to understand the other any better. In fact, we appear to be shouting more and more across

the fences in our global village, and the words we use are increasingly naughty.

Our society sometimes talks of “acceptable levels of violence” – a somewhat curious notion. A certain amount is generally expected, whether on the hockey rink, the football field, the picket line or in the arts.

But it is not in the fact of violence itself, but also in the treatment it receives in the media that great additional damage is done.

It is so fatally easy for a producer or editor to show only part of the story in order to get his particular point across, and it is here that all through the communications industry violent assault is made upon the entire population.

How slickly one can depict certain people as “enlightened reformers,” and those on the other side as fanatical and narrow-minded reactionaries: a cleverly slanted script, two actors, one with a sympathetic and another with an unattractive face, will turn the trick every time. The same thing can be done with voices on the radio or in newspaper or magazine reporting.

And thus the homosexual, lesbian, transvestite, impersonator or other deviant can become the tragic and misunderstood hero in the story, evoking our warmest sympathy; the criminal convicted of a revolting crime can be seen as a helpless victim of circumstances, to be pitted and released; the bi-sexual person depicted as the daring innovator of new lifestyles of self-expression and celebration of life; the avant-garde artist with the rape-on-the-stage a pioneer in the exploration of authentic existence; while anyone objecting to these matters is not too gently categorized as a hopeless Victorian relic, so full of sexual hang-ups that he should not be allowed to speak even one sweet word of reason.

In the same vein, the person who still has some respect for language can be painted as an insufferable snob, while the one expressing himself in gutter words is considered as being in touch with life, without even the slightest hint that the only thing he might be in touch with is the gutter.

Thus, the turning of the arts into an instrument of violent assault upon aesthetic sensibilities, whether through music (rock, sex-rock, or the more serious atonality of chaotic modern compositions), the cult of the four-letter word, painting

and sculpture (examples abound), match the aggression on moral and ethical standards which are still held by an appreciable number of people.

The process of the deterioration of the arts in all their forms has been well described by Richard Weaver in *Ideas have Consequences*, (University of Chicago Press), which, when it appeared in 1948, was one of the more prophetic books of this century. Another assessment of present day society is found in the work of Duncan Williams, *Trousered Apes* (Delta 1971) and *To Be or Not To Be* (Davis, Poynter Ltd. London 1974).

### The Bible and Fairy Tales

It is often objected, when Christians raise their voice in alarm over violence, that the Bible is full of violence. How true. It not only contains a report of the first murder in history, it also reports the blackest crime ever perpetrated by man. However, even here modern writers can learn something: the disciplined restraint with which the four Evangelists describe the events of Good Friday might profitably be emulated by those who report on crime today.

The objection, however, does not hold. For in the Bible violence and evil are seen in their true reality, not as something to excite one's imagination and entertain the reader, but as a cosmic phenomenon which is in the process of final and complete defeat.

A similar argument is often levelled against the tales that children were told in earlier days: fairy tales, which also contain stories of bloodshed, aggression, slaughter and battle. Again, we cannot accept this argument.

We have but to consider the difference between a television show which begins with a violent act so that it can hold the viewer's attention, to the totally different setting of a parent leisurely sitting down with a child, opening a book and beginning, “Once upon a time, long ago and far away, there was a King . . .”.

Immediately, an atmosphere of relaxation is established, a perspective is introduced – something happened somewhere, long ago and far away, which permits objective discernment. And once again in fairy tales also, evil and violence are

seen as an unnatural and undesirable condition which will be disposed of.

Particularly enlightening here is the treatment of violence in books as J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*; and, for children, in C.S. Lewis's Narnia series. In these also there are great battles and much bloodshed, but once more evil is viewed as a cosmic dislocation which exists, but will be defeated inevitably, since it has no true place on earth and must therefore be cast out, after which there will be no more violence.

## Conclusion

We live in a violent society and, sadly, people appear to accept it as part of life. This may be due in some measure to the constant barrage of violence coming to us through the media.

There is violence done to the ear, the eye, the mind and the soul, and each of the media takes a turn in the constant assault on ethics, morals, and the good, the true and the beautiful.

In fact, the only recent mention of "sanctity" in the media has been, not in a theological or moral context, but in connection with varied labour disputes across the country. We are drawn to the somewhat startling conclusion that the only thing that appears "sacred" in today's society is the collective bargaining process. (Ipse Dixit, Ex Cathedra, Petrus Trudeau.)

We would be amiss if we did not conclude this brief with a suggestion, if not to improve upon current practices, at least to halt the increasing momentum of decline. We observe that censorship, ratings, protests, and other agitations often have what are termed, in current jargon, "counter-productive" tendencies.

It would appear that there is little hope that our governments will stop grants to various media, producers or artists to present inane and revolting material, whether in the name of "art," "liberation" or "Canadian content."

Equally, the prospect of our educational system to take seriously the teaching of history and discernment to know the difference between good and evil is somewhat dim. We may refer to the language and behaviour used by striking Toronto teachers at their various meetings as supportive of

our argument that we can expect little from that direction.

Ultimately, the only effective way of stopping this is for people to refuse to buy magazines, papers, or to turn off their television set. We are not very optimistic on this issue either.

It may already be too late. As Santayana observed, he who will not learn from history is condemned to repeat it.

For, as the book of Genesis already observes in its profound psychological assessment: "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (6:5), and . . . "the earth is filled with violence through them. . . ."

And thus our society, in which increasing numbers of people are content to eat like pigs and behave like swine in its insatiable urge towards self-destruction, may well be on the way to a twentieth century version of the Gadarene gallop, and, driven by the legion of demons so dutifully conjured up (and presented by the communications industry in living colour and explosive explosives), cast itself headlong into the waters.

May it rest in peace. We doubt it.

Rev. H. Miller  
Church of St. John the Baptist  
(Anglican)  
Fort Frances



**Paul J. Eisenbarth**  
**West Bay Indian Reserve**  
**Manitoulin Island**

**Communicated Violence**

We all communicate, and, in fact, probably the most universally time-consuming task of the human industry is that of communication. What we choose to call the communications industry is merely an extension of various majorities of the consumer population, at least in our society, that is forced, through its dependence on advertisers or patrons, to tell the majority what it expects to hear or enjoys hearing about itself and about others.

I believe that most of those who have studied the human mind and violent human behaviour would agree with the following premise: that physical acts of violence done by real people in the everyday world are, as a rule, an outward expression or explosion (vengeful, self-obliterating or non-directed) of prior inner, emotional violence already done *to* the eventual offender. In addition, by “violence done” we must agree to mean “violence experienced as having been done” to the particular person in question. This is the existential view – that I know what is real: what has happened to me; and you know what is real: what has happened to you; but if we compare notes, we must disagree on what has really happened unless we agree that “reality” simply *means* “what I have experienced as having happened to me”. Only then can we begin to understand the full significance of the messages we communicate by our words and actions.

The other important premise is that the subconscious or inner mind, the self, the being that motivates our actions and our dreams, cannot distinguish – or “knows better than to distinguish” – between what modern consciousness separates out as “physical violence” and “emotional injury”. To the subconscious, the real self, the “difference” makes no difference. In both supporting and elucidating these points, as well as what follows, the writings of the Scottish-American psychiatrist R.D. Laing are of immense help and are highly recommended.

Consider a man and woman who become the

parents of a child whom, for a combination of unpleasant and repressed reasons, they are, in fact, unable to love. Consciously, they are seldom aware – and then only vaguely – of this fact, a fact which, if fully conscious, would threaten their image of themselves as loving, tolerant, civilized, Christian people. A common reaction to such a situation is for such parents to shower the unloved child with gifts, toys, material luxuries, and insincere promises of future pie-in-the-sky, while simultaneously refusing to allow the child to take a step on its own, to voice an independent opinion, to “talk back”, or to come home late for supper and covered with mud like a healthy, growing human being. If the child later rebels, turning to shoplifting or vandalism, a neighbour will say that the child has been “spoiled”; if the child becomes a spineless non-entity, silently toeing the line with downcast eyes and mumbling speech until the termination of its life by suicide, the neighbour may remark that he was “always a strange, quiet, brooding sort of kid anyway – probably wouldn’t have amounted to much.” In either case, the parents will publicly wring their hands and declare: “We gave him everything; he never lacked anything; we took good care of him; how could he do this to us?” They will prefer to view their own behaviour as verifiable evidence of their self-sacrificing love for the child. But the child will not have been deceived. His inner self, which does not distinguish between the physical and the emotional, will have felt itself crushed, strangled, beaten half to death, devoured, and made to feel insignificant, unlovable, and possibly evil. Images of this sort will appear in childhood nightmares or may crop up later as psychotic “delusions” in time of additional stress. It is, in fact, literally true that the violence experienced by the self is violence actually done, awaiting the inevitable response or even retribution. And the weapons of this violence have been the messages received by the self from the communicators in its environment and experienced as attempts to destroy or swallow up an insignificant, unlovable, evil creature.

The child in this story may represent a group of people, a collection of related selves exposed to a similar series of consistent messages. Let us, for example, consider the messages received by the

“native self” during some of the history of its contact with the non-native “communications industry”.

One of the earliest such contacts would have been with the Bible, as interpreted by missionaries through the additional medium of the pulpit. The native person is informed of his original sin, of his savage existence – “scarcely better than an animal” – outside the circle of the chosen people of God. The church will wash away his sinful savagery, the legacy of his ancestors, and thereby make him a worthy human being. Note also that the word “animal” – which from its Latin root means “possessing a soul”, an idea few traditional native thinkers would have questioned – is here communicated to mean “unworthy”. Whether the church ever intended to convey such messages is irrelevant, for there are many native people alive today who can recall receiving this information during the course of their upbringing.

It may be doubtful whether the nineteenth century rhetoric of the average Indian treaty communicates much of anything. Nevertheless, the end result of the treaty-as-communication seems usually to have been the receipt by the native person of the message that a promise made to an Indian need not be honoured – this despite the traditional common law recognition of even non-written agreements (for instance, marriage proposals) as legally binding if verifiable. Intentional or not, the trail of broken treaties is an ongoing unindictable but communicated violence to the native psyche, further diminishing its stature in its own eyes.

The school environment, which communicates to the young almost as effectively as television, has, in the past, conveyed the unmistakable message that native languages are not to be used in polite society, that doing so is punishable, and that English is the sole acceptable code in which to pattern and to voice one’s thoughts. A language is a philosophy, a way of seeing the world. Discredit a language, and one has murdered the traditional thought patterns of a people. As if this were insufficient psychic violence, schools have employed textbooks that speak of “pioneers” entering “untamed wilderness” and facing the danger of “Indian massacres,” that portray General George Custer as a hero, and that fail to

mention the introduction of the practice of scalping by the Spaniards. Locally, schools continue to employ at least one totally incompetent teacher who openly speaks of his Indian students as “scum” and produces each year an entire class of precisely what he expects – but cannot be fired because he is a federally employed civil servant with seniority.

The Department of Indian Affairs gives lip service to native self-determination and self-sufficiency, but continues to jealously guard its monetary veto power over powerless non-traditional reserve governments, while more and more firmly entrenching a bureaucracy whose net annual income dwarfs that of all the people it is supposed to “manage” or “protect”.

Ministries of health are capable of concealing an immense mercury poisoning problem in a native population, while a northern author publishes a book describing the very symptoms of the disease as evidence of the intolerable worthlessness of her Indian neighbours. When action is taken, it may be in the form of signs posted in English and warning the few natives who can read them that their traditional staple food is no longer acceptable. There may then be no action at all taken against the actual poisoner.

The traditional holy man, healer of the sick and philosopher of a theory of health emphasizing balance and harmony between the physical and the spiritual, the inner and the outer, seems to have been partially discredited by his helplessness in the face of sudden overwhelming epidemics of strange new diseases at the time of first contact with the Europeans. Since then, the rejection of his “mystical, unscientific” system through the persuasive power of the modern wonder-drug and surgical-cure approach to all health problems, has been nearly total and has become so deeply ingrained in our system of basic assumptions that even a studiously unbiased CTV newscaster cannot suppress a chuckle at the words “witch doctor” in the national news. Even alcoholism, a behaviour pattern so widespread and so inescapably suggestive of the direct link between the inner and the outer man, the mind and the body, can now be sold to the public as a “physical illness”, perhaps even as a “tendency some people are born with”. The inner man is murdered and, with him, the

time-honoured religious-medicinal system that believed in his all-important existence.

The motion picture industry, radio and television have, by common agreement, been guilty of portraying the native person as savage villain, as primitive slob, as lazy drunk, as *tonto* ("dummy"), as underling, as helpless child. Only recently has there been a tendency to correct these offences, but the damage is done. Quite apart from the propagation of prejudices within non-native peoples, such not-very-subtle communications from "the industry" have battered the egos of native children and adults such that their wry humour commonly contains the phrases: "you know the Indians never win" and "just another drunken Indian."

Thus the inner being, the real essential self, of the native person is barraged from many sides, from earliest childhood, by often subliminal and/or "unintentional" messages of the sinfulness and contemptibility of his ancestors; of the unworthiness of his language, his thought patterns, to be spoken or to be learned by those who come as strangers to his land; of the scientific absurdity of his ancient natural philosophy that emphasized the equality and the inseparability of the physical and the spiritual, the outer and the inner, the "real" and the "imaginary"; of his innate laziness, stupidity, predisposition to alcoholism, inability to manage his own affairs without an overseer, and inability to even determine for himself who is "Indian" and who is "non-Indian." In the face of such real, inner, experienced violence done to the inner self by so many media, is it really any wonder that the physical extension of the self does indeed practice the chronically-suicidal self-obliteration of alcoholism or the quick self-negation of the deer rifle? Is there any mystery about undirected violent outbursts of vandalism in the schools? Is it unjustifiable arrogance when some native people who become consciously aware of the assaulting messages are then moved to "militancy" in an attempt to regain some measure of self-respect, self-determination and self-sufficiency?

Surely, in looking for the moving force behind an adolescent suicide at Wikwemikong, for instance, we do not need to look to a television program in which a Los Angeles paramedical

team administers prompt and cheerful emergency care to a middle-class drug overdose patient. If such programs do, perhaps, desensitize people to the agonizing consequences of real violence, I submit that that is probably about all they do. In searching for the causes of physical violence to self and others, we need to examine and eliminate the ego-destroying media messages that do violence to the real self, the inner man, the man that dreams, the seeker of visions.

If we cannot or will not examine communicated violence, then perhaps it is a sort of grim justice that some of us find it entertaining to see people scavenged from this earthly existence by one of nature's equalizers, the great white shark.

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*(Speech originally given to British Columbia Association of Broadcasters)*

### **The Broadcaster and the Advertising Agency - Two Key Issues Between Us**

... I would like to focus on two key issues which I believe fundamentally affect your industry and mine – which, if they continue to exist without modification, can seriously erode the value of television as an advertising medium for our clients and hence as a business tool or advertising agencies.

The two issues are:

1. The rapacious inflation in broadcast advertising rates and the resultant decline in the productivity of television as an advertising vehicle.
2. The excessive exploitation of violence in television programming and the gathering storm of reaction that such programming is unleashing against commercial television, the agencies and our clients.

Obviously, therefore, most of the remarks I will make refer primarily to television stations, that is because commercial television has most of the problems; private radio in my view, is far healthier than its richer cousin, far more in tune with its audiences and the realities of the market place.

Before commenting further on the issues mentioned, let me state my vested interest and perhaps some credentials for making these remarks.

JWT-Canada, while it is not the largest advertising agency in this country, is the largest single buyer of broadcast time. We placed (on our own clients' behalf and, as an agency of record, on behalf of other agencies) some \$34 million of advertising on television in 1975 – or 71 per cent of all the advertising placed by our agency last year; in addition we placed a further \$4 million in radio advertising. In total we placed something over 15 per cent of all national television advertising time in 1974. Thus, we have a deep, vested interest, not in pointing out your problems to you, but in helping you find solutions.

### **Inflation – Rapacious Price Hikes are Severely Damaging the Productivity of Television as an Advertising Vehicle**

The rate increases in Canadian television, if they continue unchecked, will seriously undermine the value our clients have been getting from television. If that happens there will be two overriding results:

Advertising budgets will be pulled out of the television medium in increasing amounts first by reducing market lists and pulling out of smaller and medium-size station markets; and, second, by smaller advertisers abandoning television altogether in favour of other, more affordable, media.

The cost squeeze of television time is strangling many advertisers. It has continued unimpeded despite the imposition of price and wage controls – it has ignored totally the fact that, under AIB regulations, advertising is a restricted expense; that advertising/sales ratios have been frozen, so that, even large advertisers, if they could afford to, cannot increase their brand budgets to match the rapacious inflation of selective spot and network rates.

Let's look at the facts:

In the five years, 1972 through 1976, the average cost of network time has increased by 70 per cent; selective 30-second spots have increased in price by almost 50 per cent; selective 60-second spots have jumped by 73 per cent – an aggregate hike of 64 per cent, or 13-15 per cent price inflation per year.

During the same period, by contrast, radio costs have increased only 30 per cent – about the same increases experienced in newspaper and magazine rates.

Television, therefore, is out of step, out of tune, and out of phase with the realities of supply and demand. At least in my opinion. Since 1970, although rates are up by 64 per cent, audiences have grown only five per cent. As a result, the cost-per-thousands we have been buying for our clients have jumped by almost 60 per cent.

These kinds of price increases are compounded by the loss in Canadian station shares due to increased cable penetration (double since 1970); the addition of new Canadian stations (from 72



television stations in 1970, to 84 in 1975). Flat audience growth, spread among more and more outlets, makes for a very bad media buy at the best of times, but when rates have skyrocketed as on television it makes for a somewhat incredible situation. Along with this, we have more and more television commercials competing for attention. In 1972, 42 per cent of all commercials were 30 seconds; by 1975, eight of every ten commercials were 50-second units, a 72 per cent increase. The questions we are asking ourselves (and our clients are asking us) are: are these rate increases at all justifiable, or is it simply a rather cynical matter of charging whatever the traffic will bear? Certainly that appears to be true in a number of markets.

When the anti-inflation regulations were announced, many of our clients informed us, as I'm sure most other advertising agencies were informed, that price increases could no longer be accepted unless supported by documentation demonstrating real cost increases. Since October 14 we have continued to receive notification of hefty rate increases from many of you. We have asked for justification in every case where these rate increases have exceeded ten per cent. We will continue to seek this justification and we will continue to publicize all media rate increases that are excessive. If justification is not satisfactory we will have to advise our clients to pull out of markets individually or en masse. Eventually clients, in justifying their own prices, will have to, I'm sure, bring excessive media increases to the attention of the Anti-Inflation Board, if only in self-defence. Insofar as we interpret the definitions of the Board, many media organizations, by sheer size, would appear to come under the guidelines themselves and many appear to be ignoring the regulations. I suspect that will not long be tolerated by the Board.

The tragedy of this kind of inflation is that, as I remarked above, the little guys are going to get hurt first. Market lists will be reduced by agencies and advertisers. Consequently the smaller station markets will lose out. If rates are justified by increased costs (and many of them can be) how can stations reduce their costs? I know that your program costs are increasing; and your labour costs; you are, in some cases, extending your coverage areas at the request of the CRTC. All these

costs are being passed on to the advertiser; finally the advertiser is going to say "to hell with it" and pull out.

You don't want that to happen. We don't want that to happen. Our clients don't want that to happen. So how can costs be reduced? I believe that the broadcaster must be perceived as taking action; of anticipating rather than reacting. Some suggestions which may have merit:

1. Program production - your major market stations (CHAN-TV, CFTO-TV and CFCF-TV) produce Canadian programming for the CTV network. The bulk of the cost of producing these programs is absorbed by the originating station.

*One solution:* Consolidate program production under the umbrella of CTV. This could reduce labour costs and provide the necessary leverage to charge affiliated stations a fair portion of the production cost, thereby helping to hold down rate increases in major markets.

2. Reduce paperwork - Because of constant program changes, the amount of paper (make-goods, and revised contracts, et cetera) is staggering. It creates considerable work and cost for both the station and the agency.

*One solution:* Get more consistency in programming and introduce monthly makegood forms.

3. Computers - does nearly every station really need its own computer? Why not establish a central computer system through your rep firms which would be available on a cost share arrangement with all television stations represented by these rep firms?

## **Violence in Television - Will One Excess Lead to Another?**

There is an incipient bestseller emerging back home in Ontario this winter. Its off-white cover is illustrated by gory colour with the print of a human hand, dripping with blood.

It is the Interim Report of The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry, a Commission of the Government of Ontario headed by The Honourable Judy LaMarsh. Ms LaMarsh's Commission was set up to see if there exists "a problem of violence in the media" which is resulting in the stimulation of

aggressive behaviour in society. The conclusions of the Interim Report leave no doubt: "We know that there is a relationship between television viewing and an increase in aggressive tendencies, but we can only speculate as to whether the relationship exists in other media."

Another excerpt from the Interim Report states the key issue, insofar as Ms LaMarsh and her fellow Commissioners are concerned.

The consensus of research is that a steady diet of news and entertainment violence may produce desensitization, even in the fairly well-balanced individual, to a point where hurtful or violent acts against others become unconsciously accepted as normal behaviour; and that entertainment's traditional use of the violent solution to most human problems sets up a value system that is drastically at variance with the ethical base of Canadian family life.

Clearly the issue now is no longer "is there a problem?" but what should be done about it.

I suggest to you that, if the current course of events continue, there is little doubt that violent programming will virtually be regulated off the air, resulting in continuing restrictions on your freedom of action as private broadcasters and some form of censorship over programming in general. Most of the briefs submitted to the LaMarsh Commission to date have called for such actions and the Commissioners have been warning that there is increasing public acceptance of the idea of television censorship.

If these pressures don't give birth to external actions, then the assault upon broadcasters will come from within. Former CBS News President Fred Friendly was quoted last month as describing commercial television as follows: "In trying to make more money, the lowest common denominator has been catered to. And now commercial television entertainment is nothing more than a slum."

In the United States, as I'm sure you have noted, the reaction of major advertisers and agency executives to sex and violence on television has begun to take on the appearance of a general buyer revolt against the excesses they claimed.

Archa O. Knowlton, Media Services Director of General Foods, called on other advertisers to join with his company to exercise their power to curb

violent programs on television. One method he suggested was to devalue a rating point on a hard action program versus a rating point on less objectionable fare.

Buck Buchanan, Senior Vice-President of JWT New York, declared last month – "There has to be an end to the never-ending competition" to produce excessively violent programs.

Sandy Riesenbeck, Executive Vice-President of Media Services for Grey Advertising in New York, said that his agency's clients are getting more and more letters from people objecting to hard action and excessive violence on television programs they sponsor.

And it isn't simply happening "out there" – in New York or down South. A year ago, long before the bandwagon got rolling in the east, Scott Paper Co., under Peter Sanagan's direction, developed together with JWT-Vancouver, a set of specific programming guidelines for Scott Paper's Canadian advertising which precludes scheduling our advertising on violent shows. As I said, Scott took that action before the bandwagon started, before Ms LaMarsh's Interim Report, before the call for action by General Foods.

Other clients of JWT in eastern Canada are expressing the same concerns. They will, I suspect, shortly move to similar formal action, both out of personal revulsion at certain kinds of television programming and on hard-headed business judgment.

Why is that? Well, one of the ironies of this controversy is that the advertisers and the advertising agency industry specifically, are being labelled as the perpetrators of this kind of objectionable programming. Oglivy and Mather, I believe it was, discovered in a recent survey that fully three out of ten viewers believe advertisers are responsible for developing the programs they see. Which, of course, isn't true – but it's thought to be true which is just as bad.

What's the case for the defence?

It's interesting that while in 1975, over half of the 15 top shows on the CTV network were violent police action and adventure shows, and none of the top 15 shows on the CBC network were of that genre, viewers did not desert the CBC in droves. In fact, in common coverage areas, the top rated shows generally are non-violent shows on either

network: *Disney, All in the Family, Happy Days, Rhoda, M\*A\*S\*H, Chico and the Man, The Waltons, Carol Burnett, Sonny and Cher . . .* these certainly more than hold their own against *Kojak* and *Hockey Night in Canada*.

So it doesn't add up to much of a defence to claim that Canadians are ghoulishly lapping up violence and sex. When the alternatives are before them, they select the alternatives.

And certainly it is easy to find obvious links between television violence and similar acts in real life. The LaMarsh Commission has been recording many, including these unpleasant examples:

**Item:**

A fictional scene of a skid row bum being doused with gasoline and set afire was followed by a rash of such crimes across the U.S. There had been no precedents.

**Item:**

Coverage of Evel Kneivel's various jumps saw an epidemic of kids' injuries in attempts to copy him.

**Item:**

An aircraft bomb extortion plot in a television show was followed by several attempts at the real thing in the U.S.; when the show appeared on Australian television a year later, the same thing happened immediately.

When the findings of the LaMarsh Commission are made public, in perhaps a year's time, I believe their impact will be national rather than confined to Ontario; it will be a safe bet to say that broadcasters will directly feel the brunt in the form of some formal censorship over content.

Now there is an argument in defence of commercial television that violent programming may not be adversely affecting viewers at all. And that the excessive reaction against action programs is just another symptom of paternalism and elitist protection of popular tastes – tendencies which are all too familiar in our national Canadian psyche.

One could argue, again in defence, that the actual proportion of violent programming in all

entertainment is no greater today than at any time in the past. The difference is the greater access to it today versus prior decades and centuries.

Life versus death is the very essence of most literature and drama, the very limits of human endurance and understanding. Therefore, the theme of life and death has been used by authors, playwrights and actors since time immemorial. However, Shakespeare probably reached a tiny proportion of the English population with any one of his violent plays, whereas a much larger proportion of our population can see *Streets of San Francisco* within the security and comfort of their homes.

Should we ban the medium or the subject matter? Should most of Shakespeare's plays be censored now because of their violence?

The answer must be "no". The principal difference between Shakespeare's violence and violent television fiction is the way in which violence is treated.

Certainly, violence is significantly more excessive in the classics than in today's average television program. Television shows lots of deaths, but they are usually nice, clean shootings without blood or consequences.

Compare this with the gory episodes by many classical authors and playwrights. In Shakespeare's *King Lear* Gloucester had his eyes gouged out by the heel of his son's boot, and we won't even get into *Hamlet* or *MacBeth*.

Even high moralistic or religious efforts such as *Paradise Lost*, *The Faery Queen* and *Pilgrim's Progress* are not without their gory moments of decapitation, torture and general violence. And let's ignore *Oedipus Rex* and the glorification of premarital sex in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Why then are these considered classics that our children should read and see – when the much milder *Streets of San Francisco* is regarded as a danger to their mental and emotional health?

The answer, as I said, is in the way the classics treat the subject of violence with a deep sense of the tragedy or victory that follows it. When Cannon shoots somebody, the deceased usually is a plastic replica of a real person. There is usually very little characterization and little time is spent on what impact his death has to family or friends. In other words, there is no feeling of revulsion or

pity at his death; no sense of tragedy at the loss of life; no understanding of the pain, suffering and anguish being felt by both the deceased and his loved ones; no sense of remorse by his killer. He is merely an adjunct to the plot, who is knocked off to generate some viewer attention.

But if the current television violence is so superficial, does it have any real impact on viewers?

Children have always copied and emulated things that they see and hear. If the Wright Brothers had made their first flight in 1975, it would have been televised, and the odds are high that there would be a flock of children lining walls around the world ready to leap into space aboard homemade kites.

We cannot ban or censor everything that might affect them.

And surely it is only a lunatic fringe which burns old men down back alleys and phones bomb threats to airlines.

If they weren't doing this, they would be finding other ways of harming people and causing general mischief.

Can we really censor television enough to prevent these lunatics from picking up any ideas at all?

But, on the other hand, let's assume that the general public is being influenced by violent media programming. Some general evidence seems to suggest that it may be a positive influence in that there is a growing revulsion to war and violence. For example, we wouldn't be discussing this subject today if we weren't aware of the dangers. We've seen flower children, hippies and peace movements emerge in the last ten years – kids weaned on a continuing diet of television from the day they could see.

Gun laws are at last becoming a reality in North America.

Parents are guiding their children away from violent toys and games.

The *Yankelovich Monitor* of social values points to "the need for law and order" as the most important trend among consumers today.

All these facts point to a growing awareness and concern about violence among the general public. Perhaps *Streets of San Francisco* is just reinforcing

anti-violence beliefs in viewers and is therefore having a very positive effect. Perhaps. . . .

Given all these arguments for and against the seriousness of the problem, I believe there is a need for broadcasters to begin some positive action of their own to maintain proprietorship in, and control over, the entertainment they offer their viewers.

Obviously, there is the fundamental necessity to produce, or insist on the production of, better quality programs and to throw out the garbage. Certainly, looking at the pilots for next season, there seems to be no diminution of violence, although there are promises that this will happen.

But broadcasters here in Canada, who distribute these programs, have an opportunity to lead some useful research to probe more deeply the entertainment values and the desires of the population as a whole. Most of the research that has been done has been antagonistic in nature; very little has been heard from the broadcasters themselves. By default, you are having the initiative taken away from you. Specifically, let me suggest two areas of research that could well be headmanned by a Canadian group of private broadcasters – to show good faith and to maintain proprietorship of the software on your stations.

First: What kind of entertainment content is actually consumed by different people? The LaMarsh Commission pointed out a real gap in this area: who is consuming what and how are they affected? Despite all the headlines, very little hard data exist on how the total media diet fits together; what offsets which among different groups of people? It may be fine to ban *Streets of San Francisco*, but what real effect does that have within the total mix of news, entertainment, video, audio and printed communication that gets inside different heads in different ways? The fact is, no one is even close to knowing.

Second: How does the subject matter of a program offset the impact of the advertising contained in the program and vice versa? Dr. Leiberhan, whose tracking study research was contained in an ABC brief to the LaMarsh Commission, touched on this intriguing phenomenon: violent programs containing advertising cause less aggressiveness than violent programs containing no commercials. There may be benefits



in commercial interruptions that we have never dreamed of! Worth finding out. In a phrase – there's a need to get some facts. JWT is currently setting up a team made up of Canadian, British and U.S. based researchers to examine the feasibility of researching the impact of violent programs on advertising within those programs. We would be willing to work with any Canadian group to pursue, within the limits of our resources, specific research here in Canada. But your industry must lead the way. And be seen to lead the way.

These then are two key issues I recommend to your attention: cost and content. Your prosperity as private enterprises, the continued growth of a healthy commercial television industry, depend on anticipating the trends that may harm your industry if these two issues are ignored or dismissed rather than vigorously and intelligently addressed by the commercial broadcasters. There is still time to anticipate rather than react. . . . let's get on with it.

Thank you.

*J. J. Cronin, President*

**Paul S. Licker**  
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**Chacun à son goût:**  
**Special Effects for Special People**

Typically, research into the "effects" of violence in the media has concentrated upon bolstering general theories of behaviour within specific media consumers – children. And most particularly, these studies have been concerned with only part of their behaviour – that which mirrors or can be released by the content of what they see. (Of course, there are many field studies which purport to investigate more of the child through observation by peers, adults, teachers, wardens, et cetera. Yet it is not the findings in the field that are most widely discussed and whose findings are trusted, replicable or accurate.) There have been almost no long-term studies; that is, of course, good enough reason to doubt the applicability of the research. But far more serious is the consequence of having forgotten long-term effects, if the term effect can be applied here. For social science has recently steered clear of the long-term for various political and economic reasons. It's cheaper, easier to manage and, more important, socially more acceptable to look at what's trendy now in social science. For who knows what will be "hot" in ten or 50 years? Besides, there is a strong feeling that social change, change in the scientific milieu and technological change are highly correlated – we might not *be* here, with *these* methods, *this* staff and even *this* discipline, in even five, not to mention 15 years. Besides, the children grow up fast, these days.

Without attempting to criticize any further the short-term goals most prevalent in media research in general and violence in the media in particular, I do think it's necessary to direct attention to the results of neglect of long-term thinking. First, we often ignore the fact that short-term observation of behaviour can blind us to the fact that humans are programmed to be time bombs. All currently accepted theories of personality stress the long-term effects of both short- and long-term

processes. Research at a point in time, or even over six months with children, ignores the long-term learning effects as what goes *in* is mixed with what is already there for a ten- to 50-year stew. Second, we tend to ignore individuals who do not seem to be affected over the short term, and here the mind turns to adults.

Adults reflect about events around them. They seek justification and group support. It is interesting that much of what we think we know about human psychology has been obtained from work with American 18- and 19-year olds in American colleges. Yet, we conveniently ignore the fact that what is known about how eight-year-olds watch television is quite far from what we know about how 18-year-olds make decisions. Now, what about 58-year-olds? Have we any very good picture of how the media fit into the life of such persons? Well, we have some older studies, mainly from the early 1960s, and again, they are American. These studies are the source of what we suspect about the uses of the media. And there's the Davey Report, also, that too soon will reach its tenth birthday. Besides, there's no reason to expect that media violence really affects adults.

I contend that the concentration on children, laudable as that is, has blinded us to the long-term effects of violence in the media on adults and on specific, important segments of the adult population. I call this brief report *Chacun à son goût* because I believe that, when you start to ask questions that don't involve children, you really must start considering that questions of taste and will, things which are lacking in children's studies, become quite important. Whereas we can hope that there are many other influences in children's lives than their television sets, there are few such disturbing influences in the lives of adults. That is one consequence of the fact that adults do not learn as rapidly, nor as intensely as do children. Adults are, to a much greater extent, dependent upon their own resources in developing taste and will (i.e., learning new habits). And whereas children are institutionalized in order to make them learn, and thereby can be treated more or less homogeneously for the purposes of inferring from laboratory studies, adults exist in specialized environments, pursuing specialized goals. While much has been made recently, for instance, of

loneliness in children, it is apparent that loneliness in adults is a far more serious problem – children have known channels of comfort; adults, on the other hand, must seek comfort in limited, arbitrary, and often uncomfortable ways.

Now, for the moment let's consider where an adult, rather than a child, can turn for comfort and support. Drink, gambling, red-light districts, friends, relatives, and the church come to mind immediately. Yet far more accessible or far more socially acceptable are the media. First, they are in the privacy of your living room. Second, you can delude yourself into examining the educational value of the programs. Third, you can participate vicariously with others potentially (and imaginarily) sharing your problems. Television, radio (especially open-line talk shows), the newspapers (especially letters to the editor and the "personal" want-ads) provide this needed interaction.

Such an analysis sounds dangerously like an "opiate" of the masses viewpoint and is subject to the same criticisms. But for certain, special people, the mass media are the only source of contact, social identity, taste, what Wright refers to as "social radar" in their lives. It is this group which I am concerned with. I speak of the elderly.

The elderly are unique in our society. For they combine, in a special way, all the attributes of a whole life in one corporeal moment. They are like children, because they need special physical care, are often ill, are not physically mobile, have trouble communicating, and often have needs, not so important to us, but quite important to them that they are frustrated in achieving, because society seems uninterested in their voice. Like adults, they have knowledge of a career, their own specialized knowledge of a technical nature based upon their jobs and avocations, an understanding of and a cynicism for the saving power of other humans, and an adaptation to a way of life that is steady, without the constant change so characteristic of (and so necessary for) children. But unlike these two groups, they are more and more dependent upon vicarious existence for maintenance of a semblance of life.

Now I do not mean to imply, of course, that the elderly do not love, hate, protect, attack, reward and punish as we all do. Nor do I mean that

without the media the elderly would be vegetables. But it is increasingly apparent that the demands of life, which we are adapted to in adult life (which, in fact, our childhood prepares us for) change in content, but not in force and that "being elderly" no longer means a retirement from the cares and vicissitudes of life, but rather a different kind of care, in which the primary aim is no longer growth, but maintenance. With early retirement, increased leisure, and the total disintegration of the family as an institution (coupled with a correlative disintegration in the other, permanent institutions such as church, fraternal, national and charitable groups), the "senior citizen" can look forward to a "golden age" with the emphasis on the price of gold. Just as we would like to think of the child as just a shorter adult, so we now think of the elderly as creakier versions of ourselves. This is morally just, maybe, but it is socially treacherous. Having taken persons who are human, who can participate, we thrust them to the periphery of society, yet demand, implicitly, through the new, electronically mediated institutions of television and radio (and to a lesser extent film – there's the old mobility problem here) and modern slick journalism-of-the-young, that the elderly think young, act young, to be young.

Well, there's no evidence that any particular age grade has the monopoly on humanity. A human being is entitled to whatever all other human beings get. Yet we give only half (exactly half, as I'll point out) measure to our elderly. We expect from them adult behaviour when we remove from them the ability to participate as adults. And adult behaviour is increasingly being defined from the tube, the box, and the journal, in advertisements, in fast-paced news, in features glorifying achievement and contribution, beauty and speed. All this, to an audience practically captive because of social disintegration, leaning upon their fake electronic social workers for comfort.

Now, this is not just a polemic about how we oppress the elderly. We don't manage to oppress them, anyway, any better than we manage to oppress any group who is treated as mere consumers of products without a voice in the production. No, what I wish to point out is the particularly insidious effect years of watching, listening to, and reading about, violence, threats,

the confrontations of youth, the simple solution-by-force, trick, or artifice of today's media upon essentially helpless victims. The elderly, who depend upon the media to maintain the contact they need themselves and the contacts they must have to remain competitive (and note the hidden violence in that term!), are given a constant bath of fear, hostility, distrust, coldness, artificial concern, mechanical operations, and hard, hard sell. It is this long-term effect on the world-view of the elderly which has been seriously overlooked.

The children of our society have good models with which to compare themselves. They are not, as a rule, exposed to the same stimuli day after day, at least not in modern education. They can check the rules and roles they are provided with against different realities and make decisions, not all of which must remain forever, either. Adults, having made their rules, can live by them and have the physical and economic strengths to make adjustments if they judge (i.e., if "in their view"), that something is wrong. They can move, change jobs, join a different club, drink a new kind of beer, pray to different gods, try TM, get adult education. But how many of our golden-agers turn to studying the Golden Age of Greece in our colleges and universities? How many have the economic resources to move to another city? What alternative is the retirement village? From where can they obtain the stimulation we all require? Especially those incarcerated in old-age homes are captive. What view must they have of the world outside their grasp? What does it contribute to how one will approach old age if one has seen a frightening picture of society in violence for 25 years as an adult? What will my generation of senior citizens, having successfully retired the church, the YMCA, and establishment politics, having reduced the nuclear family to Mommy *or* Daddy and little Snookums, turn to for comfort, for social radar? Why to the same media which, in increasingly greater degrees, all of us have been turning to in the past 30 years.

If the elderly see only the young and powerful engaged in strong, violent, and always short-lived, simplified conflict, they, having no other sources of standards other than their past and the present-of-the-media to turn to for judgment, cannot help but develop a particularly pathological view, not



only of society at large – we all run that danger anyway – but also of their own old age. How can they avoid the inevitable self-hatred, lack of confidence, mistrust of others or their peers that comes from this re-routing of social roots? What horrible deaths to die, bearing not only the collective karma of their own previous lives, but the collective and collected hatred they must develop of their own conditions, their own infirmities, magnified and distorted by comparison with the beach bunnies and warriors they experience on television, radio and magazines? Who can a 70-year-old lust after when *Playboy* tells him not to lust after the grandmother in the next room? What meaning can life have, if one is told, still, after 50 years of exposure to it, that the meaning of life exists only for the 20-to-39 age group? Is there any reason to doubt that the media, far from enriching or even just filling time, are constantly *eviscerating* our elderly of their memories and expectations?

What if I told you that the next 15 years of your life were going to be meaningless and would be a period of continuing decline in physical and mental prowess? You'd be upset. Now the second message is a partial necessity; the elderly do not as a rule grow strong and tall as they age. But the first is pure poppycock. "Meaning", like "beauty", is in the mind of the conceiver. Yet if we continue to think of television as a harmless diversion for the old codgers and if we allow ourselves the fantasy that *Chatelaine* and *The Globe and Mail* at least let the old folks see what's going on, we will continue to contribute, at least partially, to the continuing discounting of the last 30 per cent of our life as important. For there is nothing on the tube, nothing on the box, and little in the journals that portrays the senior citizen to the senior citizen, tells him and her how to create, grow, comfort, engage, disengage, seek truth, play games, tempt and satisfy in manners other than those engaged by 25- and 30-year-old world-beaters. We have "the news for kids" but somehow the concept of "the news for codgers" doesn't wash. So instead we tell them that what is right, socially correct, and desirable is to be young, bold, tempestuous, impulsive and violent – and ain't it a shame you can't be like that. Well, fear and loss of a good self-image are the constant rewards of such a regimen in prisons and schizo-

phrenic families; why expect anything different from the *alte kochers*?

While it is possible that adults, having the social base of their families and the reality of their jobs to judge what is really happening, what is tasteful and good, can survive the one-two-three punch of multi-media treatments across reality and fantasy, it is doubtful that many of the elderly do. I refer here to only one aspect of violence in the media. That is the process which takes a real event, say a kidnapping or a strike or a hijacking, and after *reporting* it, usually over-dramatically, on an instant electronic media (one minute on radio or five on television), then proceeds to create events in the journals for a few weeks or months by backgrounding. This process, while leveraging the outrage from pure fantasy of "it's happening to someone else" to "it's news," tends to overjustify the event, giving it more reality, more salience than it deserves. After all, it *is* manifestly happening to someone else. Rarely are the news media kind enough to humanize the story, to tell you how it really affects people over a length of time. Soon it becomes non-news. The cop's wife obviously grieves forever, but forgotten, as is her dead husband. But then the fiction media – film, television, books – re-fictionalize the events. These in turn are re-re-fictionalized in plays or other books or other films, with a potential intervening event (i.e., re-realization) such as "the controversy surrounding the recent publication of such-and-such a fictionalization of the events surrounding the recent. . . ." While this single process makes money, it is increasingly becoming telescoped. The film *All the President's Men* was conceived before the book was published! What can our elderly do to withstand this attack on their sense of time, so carefully built up over the years? Or will our future elderly be so pre-cooked by years of pre-digested news and violence that they won't care?

The view presented here of violence in the media and the elderly could be considered intellectually dishonest. After all, the examples I point out don't necessarily involve violence and I'm not claiming that the elderly become violent from watching violence. But I do feel that I'm using violence in a more general, and, for this Commission's purposes, more appropriate sense.



For it does violence to the soul of a person if he is reduced to a fearful reactor to portrayed violence, if his image of the world he lives in is so compellingly threatening that he constricts artificially through fear his already well-constricted universe, limited by physical weakness and infirmity. He becomes not merely near-sighted, but also short-sighted and ultimately blind. Is this not violence? When he puts out another's eyes we say "He is a violent man." When, as a victim of his own lack of choice he metaphorically, if not physically, puts out his own eyes, can we not call him a victim *and* instigator of violence? If his spirit is dead, was not the act of killing it a violent one, even if it is extended over several years?

Long-term studies of the effects of media violence on adults, and particularly the elderly, do not require years, for, unlike children, adults have an examinable past – there is something to compare with. They recollect, and can analyze their own past. They have a cognizance children develop only later. But unlike children, they don't have a future for application of remedy to harm.

Since the elderly and their care are provincial matters, and since recent advances in cable and computer communications lead me to suspect the new dawn of a new technological day can be combined with the sunset years, I recommend to the honourable Commission members that they look forward to increasing the salience of the media to the aged, by encouraging productions by and for the elderly on new, perhaps educationally oriented TV stations over cable, by encouraging the production of media software by the elderly themselves, many of whom, in increasing numbers, are acquiring media skills, and by discouraging the operators of old-age homes and convalescent agencies from utilizing television and radio, as well as the print media, for baby-sitters and time-fillers. Our elderly, who will one day include us all, God willing, deserve better.

These few speculations on the long-term effects of violence in the media on the elderly are, of course, just that – speculation. Hard research needs to be performed, otherwise my complaints can be turned back to me. But what is evident is that the media exist for all of us – or do we exist for them?

## Fort Frances High School

The governments which, through their police and armed services, have enforced order and their political will so violently on a mass scale, have gone in the opposite direction in dealing with individual violence. Our courts have become less punitive, as have our laws. Perhaps this is a natural reaction against the seeming necessity to increase violence in its power and scope internationally. But its effect has been to seem to condone acts of violence by individuals, and for this or some other reason, violent crime has increased significantly in our world.

Our innate desire for peace and order has made us reluctant to do violence to the violent in our society. That seems unrealistic; the previously accepted violence of the state upon its criminals, however lamentable it may have been, may in its absence, have caused an increase in individual violence, first the aggression and then the response.

Locally, as well as nationally, violence has increased in the past 15 years. Girls have become much more physical, to the point where they are sometimes alley fighting; their language has become even more violent than their acts. Boys and young men, who traditionally have been physical in their combats, are still physical, but what used to be fist fights have become unarmed combat, with no rules except to maim or kill the opponent. More fights result in hospitalization than used to be so.

The violence to property has also increased. Break and entry have become almost a normal fact of life; our school was broken into and vandalized twice in one weekend recently. Washrooms, halls, cafeterias are harder to maintain than ever before and the girls' washrooms are worse than the boys'.

*W. B. Book, Principal*

## **Family and Children's Services of the Niagara Region Niagara Falls**

As caretakers of troubled children and interveners in family conflicts, we at Family and Children's Services of the Niagara Region see violence – violence which manifests itself in the physical abuse of children, from infants to teenagers; violence verbal and physical between parents; and the violence of youth which leads to senseless vandalism, assault or self-harm.

I want to state at the onset our interest, concern and support for this Commission in the tasks it has ahead, and also inform you that a newly-formed subcommittee of the Board of Directors of our organization will undertake a study of aggressive behaviours in those we assist, to report to you next May on the relation we see between these aggressive acts and the portrayal of violence in the media.

As social workers, we recognize the propensity for uncontrolled aggression in all humans. We all have the emergency feelings which may come to the fore and lead to violence when triggered by the right stimulus.

Our fear as social workers, however, is that the normalization of violence in our society through constant bombardment in the media may lead to the assumption on the part of children that the world is really like the brutal, uncontrolled chaos portrayed on television and in the movies.

The inability of young children to make clear distinctions between fantasy and reality underlines the implications of this possibility.

If parental controls and guidance come close to disappearance as family conflicts and breakdowns increase, where are the adult models to demonstrate inhibition against the use of aggression to get what we want when we want it, by force if necessary? Certainly not on television, or in the movies. For some children, media-portrayed violence may simply lower inhibitions against anti-social behaviour in real life.

There is evidence too that television, radio and movies play a definite role in the creation of anti-social behaviour in older children – susceptible teenagers with pent-up frustrations and hostilities.

Certain children with personal or social

problems who have a need for immediate gratification, may search for an escape in the pictorial media, in an attempt to obtain vicariously the satisfactions not afforded by their real life situations.

When they identify for their release with situations reported in the media which are clearly not fantasy, but reality within their own reach, and find stimulation for instinctual gratification, the effect could be dangerous.

I cite one example of a 15-year old girl who came into our care, a victim of marital breakdown between a weak, uncaring mother and a sadistic father.

One day she intimated to her foster mother that she would like to put a knife into someone and turn it, just to see what it felt like.

Asked why she would want to do this, she said she had heard about the recent stabbing of a 16-year old girl in a Toronto subway, and "just wondered what it would be like."

We see hundreds of frustrated, frightened and angry boys and girls, and an alarming proportion of them are physically very aggressive. To them it seems to be the accepted way. Sometimes physical force has been accepted at home, or else it is the accepted way of self-expression in their peer society.

Many teenagers are placed in detention, not because we fear they will default from a court appearance, but because we fear they are a danger to themselves and others.

Most of these adolescents are aware of their actions. They simply use violence because it has been a way of getting what they wanted in the past. Others get caught up in something, and get carried away to the point where they don't really know what they are doing.

Combined with fear, frustration, anger and a breadth of other factors, the portrayal and publicizing of violence seems to form a contagious cycle, where violence feeds on publicity and publicity feeds on violence.

Youth who play a large role in committing the total sum of violent acts in our society may have less resistance to their own aggressiveness and may give in more easily to their tendencies when the environmental climate is tuned to them.

The collective values of society develop its

unique forms of deviance. One way of overcoming violence would be the elimination of attitudes of acceptance of aggression in our child-rearing practices, our school systems, and particularly in the communications industry. We are far less outraged than we ought to be, through the dulling of our sensibilities by unrelenting media portrayal of brutality.

If the elimination of violence in our airwaves and in our print and visual media is not within our grasp – although I hope it is, at least to a degree – then we need to better understand the effects of various amounts and various kinds of violent presentations on different ages of children, so that safeguards against detrimental effects can be recommended through structured viewing.

To this end, we hope to be able to better assist you in a detailed brief in May of next year.

I sincerely thank you for your kind attention this evening.

*John C. Elliott*  
*Director*

## **Margaret Maier** **Thunder Bay**

I know you've toured the province trying to determine the effects of violence in the media. I have not been aware of any encouragement to individuals to state their beliefs by mail, and so I do not know if your committee has an address.

I supply teach and have not found it possible to take time off to see any committee meetings when you were in North Western Ontario.

If violence in the media is not creating a violent culture, then I would like to know why:

1. children in the classroom cannot write simple stories without copying the stories they see on television.

2. the length of the story children write is directly related to the number of persons killed, or punched, or the number of accidents from which the author escapes miraculously.

3. there is no imagination except that "inspired" by television i.e., I have not come across more than one-half dozen (one page or less) stories that did not reflect the strong emotions of violent people, or the indifference to killing, or the indestructible, insensitive ego of the author.

4. samples of "journalism" in the elementary classroom at least 90 per cent of the time, deal with accidents, violence, et cetera – something they "observed," or happened in the community.

5. the best "creative" writing, paragraphs, et cetera, put up on bulletin boards usually always deal with killing people, robbing banks, or the Donald Duck "playful" violence.

6. in describing *The Best Birthday Party I Ever Had*, there would be punching each other, screaming and yelling, tearing a feather pillow in half, with feathers flying all over the house, and mother absolutely furious.

7. do the pupils in Kotter's classroom influence elementary pupils to talk back, think ignorance and "talking back" is smart, and so is insensitivity?

8. should putting on different roles not be adventuresome when this particularly is being rewarded?

I do not find the average child to have much imagination, to put himself into someone else's shoes, and to express himself in words other than:

angry, mad, crying, furious, enraged and perhaps sad and sometimes lonely. Actions are usually well correlated with the strong emotions, but from there on, paragraphs are often meaningless. In other words “creative writing” is stereotype, if the sentences make sense.

In the above, I have deliberately left out writing for a purpose such as: cleaning up pollution, save the forests, care of your teeth, et cetera.

It is my opinion educational television should be used only to explain factual information – how genes work, et cetera. It should not be used to destroy imagination. A few years ago my daughter was very interested in the Laura Ingles Wilder books and when these stories were later viewed on television, she was enraged many times because it was different from the book, and “the book is right because Laura Ingles Wilder wrote it herself.” I felt sorry for her many times because the show either didn’t follow the book, and she felt some of the things “could not even have happened, because it wasn’t even like that in those days,” or they depicted a particular scene which she envisioned differently. I was thrilled when I first heard the series would be shown, but my rejoicing was short-lived. Let fiction be part of the imagination, and don’t close doors with your own versions, I would say to television manipulators.

I watched *Academy Performance* last night “alone” – a two-hour show. Seven people were killed in those two hours, and none were group killings. Do we need it? No! Give me something with “mild” emotions after a hard day. (I seldom watch television, so it may not pay.) I even find the “funny shows” insensitive – telling each other off, smart-alecky. Such people, too, are heroes in today’s society. Whether or not he has much else between his ears is not so important. Where is our humanity at?

I think we are becoming a group of unthinking people – no imaginations, no original ideas among the young, computer fed, pretty well no freedom to develop their own resources. Of course, there are exceptional people – the five per cent who are self-actualized and another five per cent who are so deviant they can never be rehabilitated.

I could write more, but it may now suffice to say that I think the future leaders of our institutions

are too stereotyped to do much to enrich our country.

*Mrs. Margaret Maier*



## The Toronto Star Toronto

On the day these words were being written, the features department of *The Toronto Star* was preparing a major article filled with incidents of savage violence. On the same day, the front page of *The Star* reported an act of criminal violence, with a photograph of one of the victims being carried to an ambulance. And the front page of the sports section displayed a photograph of a brawl that had occurred during a professional hockey game the previous evening.

These three examples will serve as well as any to introduce a discussion of what the Commission has chosen to describe as “media violence” – though it may be noted that none of these incidents occurred in the media. They occurred in three separate real-life situations. The connection, if any, between publication and occurrence, between the public exposure of societal violence and the conduct of media consumers, it is the subject the Commission has been instructed to examine.

The purpose of this submission is to set forth *The Star's* policy and practice with respect to the treatment of violence in the news. Briefly, that policy is to report occurrences of violent behaviour, and to report them responsibly and in context as part of the newspaper's obligation to inform the public. The measure of emphasis assigned to news of violence is the degree to which it affects the welfare of the community.

The three examples mentioned above represent three major categories of ‘media violence,’ and three distinct approaches to the editorial treatment. Each, in other words, had its own separate reason for inclusion in the paper.

1. The feature article dealt with violence in one of its most repulsive forms. It was concerned with the considerable number of brutal attacks on sex offenders confined to Canadian prisons by their fellow prisoners. It described, in some detail, assaults and murders of this nature which have occurred inside the prisons.

This is why the article was published:

In 1973 and 1974, Henry Robert Williams raped five teenage girls, murdered two of them, and attempted to murder a third, leaving her for dead.

Williams was sentenced to life imprisonment by Mr. Justice Edson Haines of the Ontario Supreme Court, who also recommended a course of treatment for Williams, including castration. In his statement on giving sentence the judge used these words: “Without treatment and in penitentiary the accused is at real risk of being injured or killed by his fellow inmates. . . . Whatever the explanation, it is real and cannot be ignored. It constitutes a serious problem in our correctional institutions. . . .”

A serious problem in our correctional institutions is a proper, in fact an obligatory, subject for newspaper examination. *The Star's* editors therefore assigned a staff writer to research and report on the extent of the problem by describing clearly what is happening in the prisons, and by presenting the views of prison authorities, psychiatrists, sociologists and prison inmates as to why it happens and how it can be cured.

The purpose of the article was to perform a public service. In a democratic society, reforms are achieved through public education and public information. The newspapers are a medium of education and information. Not to have examined this subject, and not to have described the acts of violence which gave rise to Mr. Justice Haines's concern, would have been to ignore one of the most important functions which society expects the press to perform.

2. The Page One news story referred to above reported that an arsonist had set a series of fires in one of downtown Toronto's newest luxury hotels. Four persons were taken to hospital, and two of them narrowly escaped death. Traffic was barred from the vicinity while Metro Harbour Police, security guards and firefighters patrolled the hotel and searched for the arsonist. He was not captured.

The story was reported on the front page as being clearly a newsworthy event, and because while the arsonist – who had set fires on two successive nights – remained at large, the safety of occupants of this and other hotels was endangered. Failure to report it prominently would have been irresponsible.

But, while the story was given front page display, it was not presented as the major news of the day. It was the only ‘violence’ story on the

page and it was subordinated to two other news subjects – a federal investigation into the operation of the U.S.-Canada auto pact, and a report on the expected rise in oil prices.

This treatment reflects a fundamental news policy of *The Star*. It is relevant here to quote from the written guidelines to editors which govern the choice of front page news:

‘The basic objective of Page One is to present the day’s most significant and most interesting news, including pictures, in the most attractive manner . . .

‘. . . The front page should establish the significance of all that is going on in the reader’s world that day. This is done by a representation of stories from all sources as well as different kinds of stories. The most important events of the day – in Metro, in Ontario, in Ottawa and in the world – should all be represented on the front page. The day’s best human interest, feature, humour and news stories should also be present . . .

‘However, no crime story should be in either the black or red lines (that is, the most prominent positions on the page) unless it has unusual human interest or is in some way unique, and the front page in general should avoid a preponderance of stories related to crime or violence.’

It is worth noting that crime and violence are the only subjects on which *The Star’s* editors are specially enjoined to exercise restraint, and to employ any standard of selection other than inherent news value.

3. The sports photograph referred to above was taken during a National Hockey League game between the Philadelphia Flyers and the Atlanta Flames. It showed a fight between Dave Schultz of Philadelphia and Ken Houston of Atlanta. In this fight Schultz was the loser, and therein lay the reason for publishing the picture.

Schultz is a notoriously violent player who has the highest penalty record in the league, and is known as “The Hammer” for his tactics. The fact that he suffered a broken jaw in a fight with an obscure rookie was not only newsworthy, it was an act of retribution. *The Star*, as its files will show, does not publish pictures of violence in sport for their own sake; but it makes no apology for publishing them when they have significance in the context of the sport.

These three examples, chosen at random from a single day of newspaper operation, are offered simply to suggest the variety of considerations at work in the multitudinous individual decisions that must be made in selecting and ordering the news related to violence. May we now suggest some basic distinctions which in our view should be made in any examination of the question before the Commission.

The first of these is that the term ‘media violence’ is itself a misnomer, misleading and possibly prejudicial to impartial inquiry. It implies, for one thing, that the media are identical or at least are so similar that they can be considered as a single entity. They are not identical; they are separate and diverse in purpose, in operation and in effect. A book is not a newspaper and a magazine is not a television station. They must be considered separately.

More important, the term ‘media violence’ implies that violence occurs in the media. It does not; it occurs in many areas of human activity and is reported or portrayed in the media. It is not mere semantic pedantry to insist that the reality should not be confused with the representation of it. Such confusion could result in a disposition to deal with the symptom rather than the disease. For violence is a social disease, and the media must be as concerned with its treatment as any other of society’s institutions.

There is another crucial distinction to be made. This is between violence, especially fictional violence, presented as a form of entertainment, and the reporting of violence as an essential element of public information. It is the latter exercise in which *The Star* is engaged.

We hold no brief for the mindless and degrading brutality of much so-called entertainment with which the public is assaulted for solely commercial reasons, on television, in films, and in some print publications. Our objection to it is not on grounds of taste, though most of it has no artistic value; the Commission presumably does not aim to set itself up as the arbiter of public taste.

Our objection is that the endless depiction of fictional mayhem and slaughter, presented in real-life settings in the guise of entertainment, can only be socially destructive because it leads to the

acceptance of violence as a normal method of settling differences. Constant exposure to proxy violence breeds indifference to it, not only in the young, but among suggestible adults. It ceases to shock.

As the Commission has already learned from those appearing before it, these aspects of violence-as-entertainment are causing deep anxiety among the people of this province. They are asking either for reassurance that no damage is being done, or for direction in dealing with the problem. The Commission is assembling a body of research on which to base its conclusions. We can offer only the opinion that the present condition of affairs is socially destructive, and the hope that remedies can be found in education and persuasion based on solid information. Direct censorship, in our view, has equally evident dangers and is unacceptable in a free society.

This brief, however, is not concerned with the presentation of violence as entertainment – an activity in which we are not engaged. The Commission has indicated that it wishes us to discuss such questions as *The Star's* approach to selection and display of news related to violence; whether there is undue emphasis on such news; and whether the publication of incidents of violence tends to encourage violent behaviour, including the imitation of specific acts of violence.

*The Star's* general approach to this matter has already been stated. It is the commonly understood function of a newspaper to report on all aspects of life in the community and in the world so that citizens may be able to make informed decisions about the conduct of their affairs. There is a responsibility to do this with a sense of proportion, making judgments as to the relative importance of the events of the day. The underlying philosophy is that truth emerges from free information and free discussion. No single news report contains all the truth of any situation, but the newspaper's cumulative reporting should provide sufficient relevant information in perspective for readers to make informed judgments.

The newspaper, by its nature, has access to sources of information which are not available to the ordinary citizen, and a special opportunity to organize, assess and distribute this information. It

therefore has special responsibility to detect trends and changes, and to cushion the shock of sudden change by alerting the public to developments before they are irreversible.

Violence is one aspect of our society. It must be reported, if for no other reason than that it occurs and is part of the daily record of life in the community. But there is a much more compelling reason. If the press fails to draw attention to occurrences which threaten the peace and stability of the community, especially when they form a pattern, there will be no generation of public pressure for solutions. Not to report on such threats to the peace, or to de-emphasize them because they make distasteful reading, would be an abdication of responsibility.

It is sometimes said that the press is increasingly absorbed with violence. The opposite is the case. The fact is that violence, both private and public, has vastly increased within the present generation, and the newspapers could not fail to reflect this trend. It is a grotesque distortion to suggest that they have caused or encouraged it. They have in fact taken the other direction. A comparison of Toronto's newspapers today with those of 25 years ago will show that incidents of violence which then were headline news are obscure items today. In an era of Munich massacres, internationally organized crime, systematic terrorism and routine assassination, exaggeration is impossible. Responsible newspapers follow a policy of restraint.

It is equally fallacious to believe that a policy of lurid sensationalism is employed to build newspaper circulation. The newspapers have learned that modern readers reject that approach; few in North America will pursue it. A sensational event undoubtedly will sell newspapers on a single day. But a continued policy of exploitation, of box-car headlines for insignificant events, alienates more readers than it wins. This is *The Star's* experience over more than 80 years of publishing; it is confirmed by our own research and by independent studies.

For example, a recent survey by a federal Government agency asked Canadians which categories of news interest them most. Crime news came twenty-first in the list of responses.

In a more recent study of *The Star*, people were asked about the emphasis the paper places on



various types of news. Thirty-eight per cent felt there was too much emphasis on crime or violence, 52 per cent felt there was just about the right amount of emphasis, and only three per cent felt there was not enough emphasis. By comparison, asked about 'ideas of things to do', 32 per cent felt there was not enough emphasis, 58 per cent felt the emphasis was about right and only two per cent felt there was too much emphasis. We do not interpret the findings on crime/violence news to be a fault of *The Star* so much as they are a function of society; nonetheless, it is clear that, if the purpose of news about violence is to cater to reader needs, it would be self-defeating.

*The Star*, in brief, is convinced that undue concentration on news of crime and violence impairs the respect in which the newspaper is held, reduces its creditability, and is economically self-defeating. The extent to which such news is published is a mark of responsibility, not the reverse. It is published in the belief that society needs to be made aware of the forces which threaten it.

It may be useful to examine some specific instances in which the propriety of *The Star's* news treatment has been questioned, and to explain their rationale.

1. More than a year ago, *The Star* published a series of articles in which officers of the Metro Toronto police force were accused of using undue violence in the arrest of suspected offenders. By coincidence, a similar series of articles, independently researched and citing a number of different cases, began on the same day in *The Globe and Mail*.

Many readers complained that *The Star* was irresponsibly attacking the integrity of the city's police force, undermining its authority, and giving encouragement to lawless elements. The reasons for the series were as follows:

For many years the newspapers had been receiving complaints that prisoners were roughly treated on arrest, and beaten in police cells to extract confessions. Reporters could not investigate these complaints. They were investigated internally in the police department and only in rare cases was a public disclosure made of the findings.

Lawyers representing the prisoners usually

advised them not to make formal complaints for fear of making matters worse for themselves.

In recent years, the number of such incidents reported to the newspapers had increased. But because the police would make no public response to them, *The Star's* fairness rule precluded publication of the charges. In the end, the paper decided there was sufficient ground for suspicion that all was not well and that a public investigation was required to establish that justice was being fairly administered. A number of cases of alleged police brutality, attested by independent witnesses, were therefore published.

The series in the two newspapers had the desired result. A judicial inquiry was established to investigate all allegations of police brutality. Evidence was heard in public. The inquiry is still in progress; its report should establish whether the complaints were justified, and recommend reforms if they are needed. In the meantime, the whole system of dealing with citizen complaints against police has already been revised. *The Star* believes the newspaper articles, which encountered much criticism, performed a public service.

2. Heavy immigration since World War II has radically changed the population mix in Toronto. Immigrants from all parts of the world, of all creeds and colours, have made it a multiracial community.

*The Star* believes the life of the community has been greatly enriched by its new citizens. But this transformation inevitably has produced cultural clashes and racial tensions as well.

The paper's policy has been not to exacerbate the tensions, and, in fact, to perform a positive role by attempting to serve as interpreter between the many groups. While racial incidents could not be entirely ignored, they were treated with great restraint, as were the activities of such hate groups as the Western Guard.

The time came, however, when *The Star* became convinced that a backlash of unreasoning prejudice against immigrants, accentuated by competition for jobs in a period of unemployment, had reached proportions which must be recognized. After exhaustive research, a major article was published which documented the existence of a problem and attempted to remove some misconceptions, such as the belief that immigrants are



responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime.

The article was criticized, especially by some immigrants, on the ground that it would increase their difficulties by calling attention to them. Again *The Star* believes it performed a service; social problems are not solved by ignoring them.

3. A Tanzanian immigrant was brutally attacked by three youths in the Toronto subway. His legs were broken and he was thrown from the platform to the train tracks, while scores of citizens watched and did not interfere. The three youths escaped. The incident was heavily publicized and there was criticism on two grounds: that the treatment was sensational, and that it would inspire other, similar attacks.

It is instructive to examine the actual results. The intense publicity focused on an appeal by police for witnesses to come forward with information that might lead to finding the attackers. In response, a woman who had not seen the attack reported seeing three youths running for a bus. Bus drivers on the route were questioned, and one remembered where the trio had boarded and left his vehicle. A police canvass of the neighbourhood resulted in the arrest of three suspects. And Chairman of the Police Commission said there was no doubt that publicity given to the arrest served as a deterrent to others who might contemplate 'imitated hooliganism.'

4. Two recent news stories have reported, in explicit detail, evidence given by rape victims at the trials of their attackers. These stories were criticized as being sordid, unfit for family reading, and unnecessarily painful to the victims and their families. As the Commission has also inquired about the reporting of rape cases, it may be well to discuss *The Star's* practice and the reasons for publishing these two stories.

More than 200 rape cases were reported in Toronto in 1975. If the editors chose to exploit this kind of material, there are few times during the year when a rape trial is not in progress, and the evidence is readily available.

In fact, this is not the practice. While incidents of rape are recorded, the victims are not identified by name and intimate details of the attacks are reported only in the most exceptional cases. Nor are the victims identified when they give evidence

at trials. Trials are not reported extensively, though verdicts and sentences are recorded.

The two cases mentioned above were exceptional. The first was that of Henry Robert Williams, the rape-murderer referred to earlier in this brief. A young woman who had escaped his attack returned voluntarily from England to testify at his trial, and in view of the unusual nature of the case and the issue raised in it, her evidence was reported as contributing to the public understanding.

It was treated unsensationally, in the body of the story on an inside page with no reference to it in the headlines. It was a fair and accurate summary of testimony given in public; *The Star* merely brought it to the attention of a wider audience. This is part of a newspaper's duty in matters affecting the public welfare. By their nature, courts deal with unsavoury matters, often with violence. But not to report these cases would be a disservice to the administration of justice. To maintain credibility with the public, justice must be seen to be done as well as in fact be done, and the press, as representatives of the public, have an obligation to perform this role.

The second story was published for a somewhat different reason. There had been widespread and increasing dissatisfaction with the way in which many rape trials are conducted. Some defence lawyers put complainants through savage cross-examination in an effort to discredit them by suggesting that they are women of loose character who consented to intercourse with the accused. As a result of mounting protests, consideration is now being given to a change in the law which will limit this kind of examination by lawyers.

If the public is to understand the issue at stake, it must appreciate the kind of ordeal to which witnesses are subjected. The story in question reported accurately the questions put to one witness. We repeat that this was not *The Star's* normal practice; it was done for a specific purpose, and we regard it as a contribution to public understanding.

There are many occasions when a responsible newspaper publishes material which it knows must cause distress to those involved, and to their friends. This is not done capriciously or insensitively. *The Star* respects personal privacy; but

when private interests collide with public interest, the public interest must prevail. The line between the two is often thin, and we know of no rule that can be framed to govern all cases. It is a determination editors must make each day, and they can be guided only by humanity and common sense.

5. Last May, a student at a Brampton high school entered the school with a rifle, shot a teacher and another student dead, wounded 13 others, and then killed himself. The tragedy was heavily publicized in all the news media. Five months later, an Ottawa student fired a shotgun into the midst of 79 classmates at his school. There were immediate suggestions that the second incident had been prompted by the publicity given to the first. It is hoped the Commission will examine this proposition closely. We believe it to be invalid, but it raises important questions about the proper conduct of the press.

The first question is the extent to which the Brampton shooting should have been reported. There is surely no doubt that it had to receive attention; it was a major tragedy and it was immediately known throughout the whole community without the agency of the news media. To suppress the news would be to invite suspicion that something was being covered up, through some conspiracy between the authorities and the press.

Moreover, the incident raised a host of troubling questions. What caused Michael Slobodian's act? Had his previous conduct given any hints of his desperation or his mental condition? If so, why had it not been detected in a school system charged with responsibility and staffed with psychologists and other experts? Were there deficiencies in the school system itself? What was the possibility of other such tragedies? What measures were being taken to prevent them: should a schoolboy have access to deadly weapons, or should guns be more strictly controlled?

These and many other questions were raised in the press coverage. It developed that the problems raised by the presence of unstable students in the classroom, and the potential for violence and tragedy, have been of increasing concern to educationists but there had been little public awareness of them until they were dramatically

highlighted by the Brampton tragedy. *The Star*, which was also late in its recognition of the problem, believes that it needs public attention and discussion, and has continued its coverage of the issues. A feature article on January 30 interviewed a number of authorities in a search for suggested solutions. One of these said: "Unless the schools start to extend their area of accountability, we will have to check each student for weapons. It's time we were more alert to early warning signs. The answer is the same as it would be in epidemic medicine: prevention."

How much is too much? Is this attention to one aspect of violence the mark of an unhealthy absorption, or is it useful in throwing light on an area where action is needed? *The Star* believes the latter, and that the purpose will not be served by failure to give it heed.

Another psychologist, consultant to the Board of Education in an Ontario city, said in the same article that she is aware of at least five students who are "as capable, or more capable, of doing what Michael Slobodian did." She added: "I'm afraid. In fact, I'm scared as hell it will happen again. Sometimes, when I arrive at my office I'm actually amazed nothing terrible has happened yet."

This bears on the suggestion that Robert Poulin, the Ottawa student, was imitating Michael Slobodian. We see no basis for the proposition; it is a case of post hoc, ergo propter hoc (later than that, therefore because of that). It may well be that Poulin copied Slobodian's method of releasing whatever frustration it was that unhinged his mind. But evidence at the inquest clearly indicated that Poulin's mind was disturbed long before the Brampton tragedy occurred. It was inevitable that, as in the other cases of which the psychologist is afraid, that disturbance would sooner or later find a violent outlet. Before he took his shotgun to school, Poulin had raped and murdered a girl in his room at home. Would anyone suggest that this was triggered by reports of the Brampton shooting? And if Poulin was imitating Slobodian, whom was Slobodian imitating? His was not the first act of violence by a deranged student; we are now learning that there have been a frightening number of them. It was merely the first to employ this method.

This matter of suggestibility has frequently been raised, most often in connection with suicides. It is said that reports of suicides cause others in imitation. Again, we think it more likely that a person bent on suicide may copy the method of committing it but will end his life in any case. We are aware of only one study of the subject, carried out about ten years ago by Dr. J. A. Motto of the University of California.

Motto studied the incidence of suicides in seven cities where prolonged newspaper strikes occurred, during which the deaths were not reported. He found no relationship between the incidence in strike periods and non-strike periods, and he concluded that "whatever deleterious effect newspapers may exert on their readers stems from the implied and expressed value system (of suicides) than from news content."

It may be said in passing that *The Star* does not ordinarily report that a death was a suicide, on the basis that to do so is an invasion of privacy. But there are occasions when the right of privacy is outweighed by the public interest. If, for example, a suicide occurs in the Toronto subway at rush hour and hundreds of thousands of passengers are delayed, they have some right to an explanation.

The Commission has asked us to comment on a number of specific topics. Most of these have now been dealt with, directly or by inference; we turn to the remainder.

**'Self-censorship or internal codes on good taste; respect for privacy, violence, application to sports and entertainment.'**

We oppose censorship, including self-censorship, if this connotes a presumption that editors should determine what the public shall be allowed to know. Such presumption would require a degree of arrogance to which we do not aspire. We believe there is no subject of concern to the community that cannot be reported and discussed in the newspaper.

At the same time, we must and do apply standards of taste and judgment to what is published in the columns of *The Star*. These are necessarily related to the standards of taste prevailing in the community, and these standards are constantly changing. *The Star's* basic guideline in this respect is to publish no material which will

unnecessarily offend any substantial element in the community. But we publish some material which we know will be offensive to some readers, if our judgment is that the general interest will be served.

We respect the individual's right to privacy, again with the proviso that it must be subordinate to the public interest.

We deplore violence but we publish news and commentary on violent subjects for the reasons already given. *The Star* has long condemned violence in sport and supported every effort to reduce it. We do not believe these efforts can succeed unless publicity is given to the abuses which exist; but we do not publicize sports violence for its own sake.

Similarly, there is violence in some areas of entertainment which we consider degrading and destructive. We report it without endorsing it. The newspaper may and does condemn it, but only pressures from an informed community will reform it.

**'Reliance on and policies toward imported versus own domestic newsgathering services; reflections of U.S. news styles, priorities, content, especially with regard to violence related news'.**

We live in a North American society heavily influenced by U.S. culture, and our newspapers, like all our institutions, reflect this influence. We publish news of events and developments in the U.S. because Canadians are strongly interested in them.

Both our attitudes and experience are not identical with those of the U.S., and our treatment of domestic news is determined by our own separate values. To give one example: When a Toronto police officer was shot and killed while making an arrest, an American editor visiting Toronto was astonished at the prominent coverage given to the story. To him it was a routine news story; to Canadians it was a rare and shocking event.

**'Advertising influence on content and advertising content policies.'**

Advertising has no influence on news and editorial content. Advertising content is governed by a detailed code of acceptability standards of which the following excerpts are relevant:



'*The Toronto Star* will not knowingly accept advertising which in its judgment is designed to mislead, confuse, deceive or defraud; is indecent or offensive or contains text or illustrations in poor taste, when judged against current social standards; (or) contains attacks of a personal, racial, religious or political nature.'

'The essential policy with respect to entertainment advertising is that *The Toronto Star* will not accept advertising that seeks to exploit sex or violence for commercial purposes, or advertising that depicts overt use of drugs or alcohol, or uses vulgar or obscene language, or illustrates conduct contrary to normal moral or social behaviour.'

In the context of the Commission's study, the chief application here is to publishing entertainment advertisements, particularly those for motion pictures featuring violence and pornography. Such advertisements are rigorously screened. Those considered to transgress the bounds of taste are rejected, but may be accepted if the text and illustrations are revised. This is necessarily a subjective decision, and errors of judgment may be made in an area where strict definitions are impossible. Our aim is not to allow our pages to be used by ads that seek to exploit sex or violence. *The Star* takes the position that while it cannot control the content of a film or other entertainment, it must make its own determination as to what is fit for publication in the newspaper.

**'Pro-social policies, strategies, budgets, emphasis; specific policies, if any, for younger readers'**

*The Star* earnestly believes that a newspaper's primary responsibility is to its readers and to the public good; all other interests are subordinate. To that end all its policies, strategies, budgets, and emphasis are designed to be 'pro-social'. News is selected and displayed on the basis of its significance in the life of the citizen. Editorial comment and analysis are designed to be constructive.

*The Star* attempts to promote the interests of children, as in the education system. It publishes regular features intended especially for children, as it does for other elements in the readership. It regards itself as a newspaper for the family. But it is not edited for children in the sense that it contains only material suitable for their reading.

Any subject of concern to the community at large can be dealt with in *The Star's* columns.

**'Accountability practices within the organization re aspects of the above'.**

*The Star* is a pyramidal organization with subordinates responsible to superiors. Disciplines are similar to those in any substantial organization.

**'Research on readers, reactions, tastes or on potential effects; perceptions of the educational and other impact of the newspaper.'**

*The Star* has volumes of research, accumulated over many years and impossible to summarize here. This research, plus direct experience of publishing and the daily response of readers, has resulted in the philosophy and policies enunciated throughout this brief.

**'Response to complaints from members of the public, advertisers, critics, politicians regarding violence and the level of effectiveness of complaints.'**

All complaints from all sources are acknowledged. They are effective in contributing to a continuous re-appraisal of news, editorial and advertising policies. No policy or practice of *The Star* is immutable. Objectives, methods, and budgets are regularly revised in the light of changing conditions. In the news area, a senior editor is specifically assigned to review and report on success or failure to achieve objectives, and to recommend action as required. Complaints from readers and others make a valuable contribution to this process of re-appraisal.

Most complaints concern allegations of errors, and these are covered by *The Star's* policy on corrections, which says in part:

'It is the duty of *The Star* to make a prompt correction of mistakes or unfairness.

'Every complaint from readers must be checked by the editor concerned and if investigation shows the story was inaccurate or unfair, a correction must be published as soon as possible.'

In the advertising area, a seasoned advertising executive with no direct account responsibilities is responsible for ensuring that advertising accepted by *The Star* meets our advertising acceptability standards. This executive is also responsible for handling any complaints about our advertising,



whether from readers, competitive advertisers or one of the levels of government.

Anyone not satisfied with *The Star's* response to a complaint, no matter what the subject matter, may then appeal to the Ontario Press Council. The council will make an adjudication of the issue which *The Star* is pledged to publish.

**'Proposals to deal with media violence; comments on policy approaches that would be opposed or would be considered ineffectual.'**

'Media violence' again. We repeat that violence does not originate in the media but is reflected there, as are all other manifestations of strength and weakness in the society.

It has a place in the media so long as it exists in the society as a threat to the safety of the citizen. Remove it from society, and you remove it from the media; to believe otherwise is to confuse cause and effect.

If an outbreak of typhoid occurs, a first requirement is to alert the public to the danger, the sources of infection, the nature of the disease, and the measures to be taken for avoidance. This is the function of the information media.

The media have, at the same time, a responsibility to report the danger realistically and proportionately, not to contribute to public panic by inflating a single case of typhoid into an epidemic. Equally, they must not contribute to a false sense of security by suppressing knowledge of a real and present danger.

Violence has become endemic, but not yet epidemic, in our society. There are those who suggest that its representation in the media is damaging because it encourages a casual acceptance of violent conduct as a norm of human behaviour. We believe that precisely the opposite is true; that acts of violence are still exceptional and shocking; that knowledge of them will prompt remedial action, and that it is a duty of the information media to provide this knowledge. When violence becomes epidemic, it will be too late and the media will have failed in their duty.

The Commission is asking what measures may be taken to deal with 'media violence'. Wherever the answer lies, it does not lie in official regulation of media content. Such intervention is a denial of freedom of speech. It rests on the assumption that

the press is an instrument of government, an assumption every democracy has rejected.

The media do not exist on the subsidy and sufferance of the State but on the freely given support of the public, which is withdrawn if they cease to represent the public interest. In this respect, they are in exactly the same position as governments themselves, which come and go at the will of the public to whom they are responsible. When governments or the media forget this fact they are doomed to failure.

The press of Canada, like all its public institutions, is dedicated to the achievement of a society free from violence. That condition will be achieved only if the citizen is informed of the dangers which threaten – not when such knowledge is glossed over or suppressed. While there are, and will be abuses of press freedom, the damage resulting from such abuses is inconsiderable when weighed against the dangers of the best-intentioned censorship.

*Martin Goodman*  
*Editor-in-Chief*

## Class 8/14

### Churchill Public School

### Sudbury

#### Introduction

It is not our intention in presenting this brief to reiterate a great deal of evidence that has already been gathered on the topic of violence in the media, nor do we suggest that the points of view expressed by our speakers are representative of any particular segment of the youthful population of our city.

We are simply a group of young people who have done some limited but careful research and statistical analysis on this subject, which evidence we shall present to you at the conclusion of this brief.

Our submission then, consists of two parts:

A. Three individual, and very personal, opinions expressed by members of our class

B. Some conclusions based on limited research we have done.

After which we will be happy to entertain questions from the Commission.

*Doug Foreman*

#### Statement I

“A rough force, an injurious action or treatment, and any injury, wrong, or outrage.” This is what children are viewing on television these days. Violence! It is a statistically proven fact that the kids of today, after seeing a violent show, will go out and practise this violence or aggression on one of their friends.

A lot of people my age think that the most violent television shows are *Kojak*, *Barretta*, *Police Story*. On the contrary, the most violent type of television shows are those lovable cartoons which we all watch. The most popular one is *Bugs Bunny*. Take, for example, the *Roadrunner* and the coyote, constantly trying to blow one another up with bombs. It is a researched fact that the Irish Republican Army watch these to get new ideas for acts of terrorism. These people are getting ideas on how to commit murder, distress and despair from television cartoon shows! Several years ago, violence didn't play as big a role on television as it

does today. In one year alone, a child is taught, by viewing television, how to commit breaking and entering in 28 different ways. If breaking and entering is taught to be done in 28 different ways, just imagine the different ways which are taught for committing murder: shooting, strangling, poisoning, hanging, gang wars – the list goes on and on. Disgusting!

My personal opinion is that the television stations could put on much more positive television for less money.

People are constantly talking about how smart those script-writers are in thinking up all those violent television shows. It is a researched fact that violence in the media is written at the level of an eight-year-old child.

If it is reaching them because of its suitability to their mental age, what must it be doing to them psychologically?

*Paula Howard*

#### Statement II

Have you ever wondered what goes on in a child's mind while he views a violent show of which there are many today? Yes, the impression he most certainly gets is that violence is acceptable in our society because there is so much of it around.

Let's take a ten year-old child watching a violent movie. The show concludes and with his head brimming full of violent ideas, he goes outside and plays some war games, being the “good guy” naturally, and thoroughly enjoying himself pouncing on the so-called “bad guy”. The idea is clear to him: “Everything's okay as long as I don't get hurt.”

And usually the game is cowboys and Indians, with the cowboy being the good guy and the Indian bad, of course. I think that the Indian is badly enough treated without a silly game possibly turning people against them.

Even news stories are being treated irresponsibly. The public has a right to know what's going on in this world but do they have to be shown a newsreel from the latest war because the anchor man is speaking on the topic? It's just unnecessary because the effect on an adult when they see heads getting blown off is much more potent, for they know that this is real life, not fantasy. Children on

the other hand, cannot always distinguish real life from fantasy.

The most violent film ever shown on television was a newsreel brought back from the Vietnamese war. It showed unedited film of crimes where even civilians were plastered with bullets.

In closing, I would like to make a special point. We in Sudbury have been waiting for some time for educational television. It seems to me inconsistent that a government concerned about violence in the media would delay the establishment of such a service to our region.

*Jola Malicki*

### Statement III

Wouldn't you be surprised if your neighbour told you that a rape was committed in your own home. Well it is, almost every day of the week. That innocent television is showing this to you over and over again. It is bringing violence into your living room and there is little being done about it. Between the ages of five and 15, the average child will have watched over 13,000 killings on television. What an influence! The child will begin to accept it as an every-day event. But it isn't an every-day event, or at least, it shouldn't be. The act of violence ranges from a simple slap in the face, to mass murder. Whatever extent you go to, the child will remember it in future years.

A large percentage of television shows today are sports. Most embody the philosophy, "brutality wins". Take wrestling for instance. Many young boys watch this and go out and test new techniques on friends. Wrestling is strictly a big put-on in order to show violence. Does that make sense? As far as I can see, it is doing more harm than good.

Boxing is brutal and ugly, but the public eats it up as they do most other violent sports. To quote Dr. Gorden Warne in *The Toronto Star*: "The superficial morality used on television's police and detective serials does not cover up the real motivation, which is to sell more and more violence to an audience that has come to lust after bloody injuries."

Maybe there's some hope.

More and more articles are being written against violence in the media. More and more

people are speaking out. This Commission is a government's attempt to face up to and understand the problem. As young people growing up in Ontario, we commend these efforts and hope sincerely that some good will come of them.

*Wendy Wickstrom*

### Survey Report

Results of the survey regarding violence on television.

Number surveyed - 275

Description of sample - all grade 5 and 6 students attending the following schools: Churchill Public School; Eden Public School; Cyril Varney Public School and Westmount Avenue Public School, Sudbury, Ontario.

Date of survey - March 9th, 1976.

NOTE: A copy of the questionnaire used in this survey is attached as an appendix to this report.

I would like now to present to you some of the more interesting findings based on this survey.

64.5 per cent of the students surveyed felt there were too many killings, beatings and other crimes on television. Yet 58.7 per cent of the same people said they would view a program even though they were to have advance knowledge that it contained such violence.

56.4 per cent of the students think people their age should not be watching violence on television, yet as stated above, over half of the people surveyed willfully watch it. The attitude among these children seems to be, "I'm well enough adjusted to cope with violence on television, but it's dangerous to everyone else."

The folly of this reasoning is apparent. When we look at another result of our survey, the television show *Barretta* is the second most popular program among the students surveyed. The consensus as to why it is popular is that the show has some comedy in it and not much violence. Facts show that the *Barretta* segment aired the week of the survey contained six gun killings, one strangling, three incidents of punching and one portrayal of drug pushing. Children are obviously not equipped to be judges of what constitutes an excessively violent program.

Time does not permit me to go further into the

details of our surveys, however complete results are attached to the end as an appendix.

As our Chairman mentioned, we will now address ourselves to any questions you may have.

	Yes	No	Total Response
1. Do you think there is too much killings, beatings and other crimes on television?	171 64.5%	94 35.5%	265
2. Would you watch a television program if you knew that it was full of killings, beatings, and other crimes?	145 58.7%	102 41.3%	247
3. Do you think people your age should be watching violence on television?	116 43.6%	150 56.4%	266
4. Do you think people learn anything worth while from watching violence?	64 24.1%	202 75.9%	266
5. Do you think crime on television would give people ideas for committing crimes on the street?	209 78.6%	57 21.4%	266
6. Do you think there is too much violence in cartoons?	37 13.9%	229 86.1%	266
7. Do you enjoy watching violence, beatings and killings on television?	102 37.1%	173 62.9%	275

## Reasons

1. *Happy Days* - 61  
(1) Because it's funny and the Fonz is cool.
2. *Barretta* - 39  
(1) The show has some comedy in it and *not much violence* (sometimes).
3. *The Brady Bunch* - 18  
(1) It's a family show.  
(2) It's interesting and funny.
4. *Six Million Dollar Man* - 12  
(1) He's cute and strong and not a killer.  
(2) They like science fiction.  
(3) He's my hero.  
(4) Exciting and a lot of action.
5. *Bionic Woman* - 10  
(1) It's exciting and a lot of action.  
(2) They also like science fiction.

## Carole Paikin Toronto

Since I have never given a brief before, I'll begin with a one-sentence introduction of myself. I am a former elementary school teacher, have been a writer for an educational magazine, and the assistant editor-writer for a bank magazine, but, more than these, I am a concerned citizen.

Before getting into the main part of my presentation, I would like to make reference to a couple of comments made by John Bassett on Monday, February 9, 1976 at the opening of the Toronto hearings. A few of his points were somewhat disturbing to me. The first was in regard to the correlation between media violence and its impact on society. He took us back to his childhood days in order to make the point that he was able, even then, to distinguish between the fantasy and the reality in movies. And in judging himself to be normal, the implication of this was, of course, that all similarly rational human beings would be able to do the same. Hence exaggerated acts of violence would be recognized as 'only a movie'. If the desire to clean up media violence came only from a concern that rational people might not be able to draw a line clearly between fiction and fact, I'd say his point was valid. But there are so many other aspects to consider.

One aspect that the Commission is well aware of is the repugnance of brutal details to sensitive minds. I can recall in my childhood – and I hope I was as rational and normal a child as John Bassett – being absolutely terrified to sleep alone or take a shower after witnessing the knifing scene in Hitchcock's movie *Psycho*. And there were many among my peers who reacted identically. I had no desire to go out and knife somebody, but that did not make the viewing of such a movie in any way constructive to my development. In fact, I'm sure it probably gave my mother a lot of aggravation when, trying to teach me to have pride in myself, she found me resisting showers.

It appeared to me that John Bassett was conveniently avoiding the reality that we are not only thinking creatures, but also feeling – that, among other aspects, we are intellectual and emotional in nature. In fact, many people are more emotional than they are intellectual. Also,



human beings are extremely complex, with areas of the mind still unknown to us. Thus it is difficult to know all of the ways in which we may be affected by violence. Whatever we do know, however, I believe indicates enough to cause concern.

When Mr. Bassett went on to use the argument that the 'normal' mind would have the intelligence to evaluate what it was being exposed to, he ultimately landed on the point that, anyway, how many 'abnormal' minds are there? In this regard, it should be restated that we are well aware of the vast number of young people and adults who have allowed too much experimentation with drugs to 'boggle' their minds. It becomes difficult to form accurate opinions about who is and who is not normal these days.

Further, we might judge from the number of violent acts of murder, rape, and the rest which are publicized daily in those best-of-all sources of information (respecting fact rather than method of presentation), the newspapers. Particularly from stories about body parts found in waste-baskets or trunks, I suggest that the assorted 'abnormal' individuals who might be triggered into violent, anti-social acts, are much greater in number than Mr. Bassett would like to believe. But even if the quantity of abnormal or potentially dangerous minds was small in comparison to the so-called normal, it only takes one deranged person to go on a shooting rampage and kill and injure several innocent people. And affect the lives of many close to them. Is Mr. Bassett suggesting that such victims are expendable or even that such violent acts based upon infrequency are acceptable?

It has been pointed up and should herein be reiterated, the odd coincidence between the much-televised and publicized Brampton shooting and the subsequent behaviour of an Ottawa youth. It may be too frightening to accept the possibility that the publicity given to the Michael Slobodian incident had anything to do with the other. Still, the possibility exists.

There may be an obligation on the part of the media to report reality, but, as has been repeatedly expressed, no obligation to distort it. Peter Worthington of *The Sun* is the first to admit that nothing sells his papers more readily than a front-page headline depicting some abhorrent act. It seems a

discredit to a Toronto publication, or any, that it must rely on such destructive tactics.

My last reference to Mr. Bassett's presentation involves the comment he made that newspapers 'should' publicize subway violence – that such incidents are 'news' in the sense that they are uncommon in Toronto. He expressed the view that the publicity would encourage citizens to take positive steps to improve the situation or support police action to eradicate these behaviours. This seems an optimistic point of view, to understate it. In any case, it is an ideal. Unfortunately, there is the aspect that the publicity will encourage psychotic minds, seeking equal recognition, to repeat these media-magnified acts. We're well aware that news is one thing, and sensationalized news quite another. Which finally brings me to the major part of my own presentation.

There are massive numbers of examples I could discuss to support my view, but I have chosen only one to illustrate the way in which sensationalism is made into a saleable commodity at the expense of the public. The example focuses on *The Sunday Sun* newspaper of February 8, 1976. That edition contained the results of a survey apparently taken to determine the so-called popularity of various aspects of the newspaper. It was called, appropriately, *The Sunday Sun Reader Survey*. I would like to quote from the results of that survey as publicized by *Sunday Sun* editor, Glen Woodcock:

The best-read columnist was a bit of a shocker. Max Haines's *Crime Flashback* climbed from 72 per cent to 85.8 per cent to edge out Rimstead by .2 per cent. He went on to say that one 'happy' reader wrote, Max Haines's *Crime Flashback* is the best column ever printed in a newspaper," while another, apparently commented, "Max Haines is the best part of *The Sunday Sun*."

In reference to all of this, I don't know how many people have read Max Haines, but he takes no back seat to the worst or best of Edgar Allan Poe in his explicit description of the macabre. True, there was Poe, a classic writer of the eerie, but we know that the man was unbalanced – a genius – but unbalanced. Besides, unless encouraged to go out and find one of Poe's books, the average reader's exposure to him is unlikely.

With Max Haines, it is different. With all the

grim details, but none of the really excellent quality of the writing of Poe, Haines's work is right there amidst all the rest of the copy in the *The Sun* newspaper. It appeals to our baser instincts, so to speak, and many are drawn to read it for that reason alone. Once drawn, however, we often wish we hadn't read it.

The popularity of a column, indicated by the two words: 'always read' as is the case in the one by Haines, in truth, in no way suggests why it is always read. It only tells us that the eyes always gravitate toward it. This does not mean it is a quality item. People always may read Molson Golden ads. Or keep their eyes and ears attuned to the Molson commercials on television or radio. But it isn't the content – what is being advertised – that is hooking us. Especially if we're not beer drinkers. It is obviously the fact that those ads are loaded with pizzazz, created with ingenuity, humour, et cetera. The creators know how to appeal to our interests and too-seldom-excited sense of the ridiculous. Yet everyone knows that abuse or over-indulgence in ale is unhealthy and potentially dangerous, for the drinker and any he affects personally or socially.

In the same way, Max Haines writes in an immediate, compelling style. He uses provocative gut-churning descriptions and through the subjects' atrocity, he is able to stir intense emotion in the reader. People have a need to respond emotionally, to give them a sense of being alive. This is one reason for the successes of soap operas or movies like *Jaws*. In contrast to desensitizing us, the expert creator looks for new methods to rake up our negative emotions.

For example, Haines is good at using contrast. For those who haven't read the case presented in his column during early February, I would like to invite you to share now an aspect of the 'best read' columnist's account at that time. It involves a fellow named John George Haigh who – quote: 'sang in the Wakefield Cathedral (as a child) and received a prize for divinity in his last year of school.' Haines's contrast technique used for shock value comes in when he hits us, with searing reality that a God-fearing child became a horrible monster of a man who burned his victims in acid.

I would rather not read the specific part of Haines's story where he describes, step by step,

the explicit details of the actions carried out by the dictates of a sick mind. I include the clippings as part of this brief. Such detailed description actually educates that even one deranged reader on the methodology of a criminal and violent act. Further, because it is being written up in such detail, given so much attention, it implies a certain importance and even glamour to the deed. In fact, at one point, Haines even uses the word 'ingenious' to describe Haigh. If I was a mentally sick person seeking attention and recognition any way I could get it, I especially would be impressed with and sensitive to this kind of writing. Where Haigh is referred to as a 'conscientious monster', my eyes would focus on the word 'conscientious'. Think about it – even we so-called normal people hear what we want to in other people's appraisal of us. If someone referred to me as a 'temperamental star', I would hear the word 'star' and ignore the word 'temperamental'. I would take it as a real compliment.

Books have been written about such 'conscientious', 'ingenious' monsters as Adolf Hitler. Some have glorified the man, recognizing his genius for leadership, despite the malicious, destructive and horrible violence of his psychotic behaviour. Naturally the bookstores also hold books about him that paint him accurately, and some that wipe him out as he should be. As John Bassett pointed out, the intelligent reader would make the distinctions and judgments of reality and fantasy in these books. But again, it takes only that one deranged mind who cannot make those evaluations and who will organize a group of similarly distorted individuals to emulate Hitler and his clan. Even if the group does not gain much general attention, it may still repeat some terrible, violent behaviours. Luckily, material in books is not as readily accessible as what is flashed in newspapers or on television.

As an intelligent society, we do need to hold the reins in regard to what we allow to permeate our society. If we show concern and conscience by asking for restraint on the ways in which so-called newsworthy events are presented, we are indeed taking the responsibility for helping maintain the kind of society we feel safe with. This is not going to be a society where violence will be completely eliminated. That of course would be a totally

unrealistic expectation. The most realistic expectation would be a society where violence is reduced considerably. This perhaps could be set in motion by the very source which seems so petrified by it, in other words, the media. That source actually can play a tremendous role in helping elevate our society, but instead, it has chosen to contribute to its chaos. All that is necessary is that newsworthy events be presented accurately, and honestly, and that violent incidents be placed in the proper area in the newspaper. This may be in some remote corner of the last section. This would depend, naturally, upon the event. The whole point is that these so-called 'real' aspects of society must be played down, not blown up, not highlighted. Reported, period. Forget using superlatives, enormous headlines, centre-page spreads, and bold face type.

The media can decide to play to the status quo. It can excite and maintain the aspects of our nature that have seemed aroused and drawn to violence, or it can seek to elevate and inspire positive change in our society. Not to bring about a Pollyanna brotherhood of man, despite the refreshing splash this might be for a spell, but rather, a world that cares and is at least as safe as we can make it.

Sadly, it takes the John Bassetts of this world, who hold some influence, to squawk about, heaven forbid, some restriction to his freedom, to sustain the most incredible and ugly of evils. It is time that we confront such people rather than back down when they confront us with what seems logic to them.

I recall a comment made in regard to the fact that Judy LaMarsh had been dissatisfied in the earlier months of the Commission's life, with the lack of public involvement. I don't recall who said it, but the comment was that the reason the public may not be coming forward to the extent Miss LaMarsh would like, is because we don't need a Commission to tell us that violence is bad for society. There was even a cartoon in *The Star* to this effect. This whole line of reasoning was in my view, a nice copout, and a complete misconception. A misconception in the sense that it is obviously only a small purpose of the Commission to say authoritatively that violence is bad for

society. The work of the Commission certainly must go far beyond that point.

The argument is a copout in the sense that if we were a society that easily accepted change and the need for change, a Commission such as this would not be necessary. But we are a 'gimme proof' society, and we definitely have a 'gimme proof' government. How many smokers, for example, seeking to sustain the vice, say 'Give me proof that smoking is fatal, then I'll quit'. Then along comes an inundation of proof and the smoker says: "That is only the opinion of ten men. Give me 30". Then he is given 30, and the smoker says: 'But what about the old man in the Hunza Valley who lived to be 150 and he smoked for all those years?' We are a world of great rationalizers. In reality, proof positive will not convince those who are profiting from the continuance of the exploitation of violence. Or pleasuring from it.

Crime has always held appeal to people. Hitchcock made a fortune on the twists of psychotic behaviour. He is, perhaps, more mellow in his later years, maybe because the competition with other horrible shockers has greatly increased. No one doubts that the soil has been fertile, that people have indeed responded in the millions to these terror movies. But the trend does seem to be changing to a revival of old favourites, like *Sherlock Holmes*, *Holmes* and *Ellery Queen* test our ability to predict events. They tease our intelligence. They don't needlessly dwell on gobs of blood and decapitated body parts to keep us interested; they can hold us on classic plots.

I long for the days when an old-fashioned whodunit depicted an art which has been buried under gimmicks and methods of eliciting shock. The idea now seems to be a game of oneupmanship where horror is the dice tossed among media magnates who are making us seem like a flock of dimwits who sit back vacuously crying (as one cartoon character put it): 'Scare me to death man.'

I would like to believe we're a more classy and cultured people, we Canadians. That we can set important precedents in the area of media violence. Report truth, sure, but respecting the human element in representing accurately without the gory details. Perhaps other newspapers could learn from the way *The Globe and Mail* recently

depicted a violent event. The headline was kept small, the facts hardly embellished if at all, and the item was placed with so many other events that it did not overpower us. No blood-and-gore bold-faced type.

Maybe Haines is the best read columnist, but then, I wonder where the reader's attention would be if the choice was better. What we are given in *The Sun* is like having to choose between bad and worse in elections. What if we had Arthur Conan Doyle, author of *Holmes*, writing a column?

Finally, the best channels on television, in my view, are 19 and 17. They educate, stimulate, and raise the cultural levels of society. If an American friend of mine was to ask what stations are Canadian, I would be quick to say 19 and tempted to include 17. I would be proud to let those stations represent my country.

*Carole Paikin*

## **Northwestern Regional Council Thunder Bay**

I do hold hope for the broadcast industry because of our unique situation in Ontario. We have our own broadcaster in TVOntario, the broadcast network station of the Ontario Educational Communications Authority (OECA), a station to which every taxpayer in Ontario contributes. Unfortunately, we do not receive it off-air in Northwestern Ontario because the government in power has postponed the network expansion of TVOntario, to this region, but it is only a postponement and we will receive it eventually I am sure.

*Mrs. Beckie Barber*  
*Chairman*



**Michael Blurton**  
**Toronto**

Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen. May I first thank you for accepting a brief from an individual citizen and parent. I am no expert, but would, nevertheless, like to draw the Commission's attention to some considerations which are, I believe, fundamental to the consideration and understanding of violence.

Firstly, I believe we should remember that violence is initially a state of mind which, in its most critical form, can manifest itself in interaction between living things. In particular I am talking about violence between human beings. This identification is important, because it should arouse all the concerns we have in our society for human dignity, human equality and liberty. If we do not consider violence in those terms, then we are simply begging the question.

Because it is so essentially intertwined with the characteristic functioning of the mind, it is governed to the same patterns of behaviour which are well recognized in, for example, economics and consumerism.

There are several fundamental aspects which I would like to draw to your attention, for I believe that the entire panorama of violence must be viewed with reference to them if we are to come to grips with the subject.

One fundamental is that there is some violence in all of us. I think this is generally accepted, although we are not yet able to measure the levels. It also seems to be reasonable to believe that the level manifested is influenced by external stimuli.

It is at this point, however, that the recognition of another fundamental is useful. That is, that the human being reacts differently, according to whether or not the violence is made specific or abstract. This is crucial to the entire discussion of violence, for, time and again, we experience two parties arguing the matter, where each seems to think that they are talking about the same thing whereas one is actually discussing specifics and the other abstract.

Most of us deplore specific violence, but can be brutalized and led into it by becoming immune to the suffering of abstracted violence.

Some of the discussion following a recent hockey game is a case in point. One party is focusing on details of how hard a particular

individual might have been struck, whereas another party is concerned with trends.

The pornographic and violent films are also good examples. The actors, producers, distributors discuss the detailed specifics of a particular film, whereas a section of the public is protesting on more abstract grounds.

It would seem to be a basic essential, therefore, that the two aspects be considered together with evaluating potential violence in our society. It is our very failure to do so which places regulatory bodies, and the police, in impossible positions when it comes to drafting and enforcing controls.

Before reaching the main gist of my submission, I would ask you to bear with me while I identify a couple more fundamentals.

One is that we must recognize that, as part of the mystery of the human mind, violence can be made to be a desired commodity for consumption. And just as surely, there will be people ready to produce and supply that commodity, but who are not necessarily violent themselves. And just like any other commodity being produced, it becomes difficult to terminate or even attenuate. We should also recognize the range of the subject, from a voice being slightly raised through to a child being tortured to death.

Another fundamental, which is true for most consumed commodities, is that although initial demand can be stimulated to be high, as the amount consumed increases, the levels of satisfaction decrease. At the ultimate margin for violence there is nothing, only death. The producer, however, attempts to overcome this law of diminishing satisfaction by changing his product.

The amount of change is determined largely by competition and the rate of decline. This holds true for violence. The Roman gladiator fights became progressively more obscene, and eventually had to include the spectacle of human torches.

Violence is the arena in which all the above-mentioned factors congeal together in their most horrible manifestation. The danger of insidious corruption of our society comes, not so much from external forces, as from our own laxity when we permit the virus to follow its inevitable growth to full-scale evil.

The German Nazis understood these dynamics very well. They carefully corrupted a society which, at the beginning, could probably have not foreseen itself supporting the horrors which it ultimately did. They knew that the average natural person does not accept specific person-to-person violence. Their first task was, therefore, to obtain acceptance of violence in abstract. That is, violence committed by others to others. They did not have television, although they made use of films, but mainly they had the Jews and anti-Nazis. By the time most Germans were accustomed to seeing the results of remote violence, they were ready to be led to deeper participation.

If you visit the memorial Dachau concentration camp outside Munich, you will learn that it was an SS training centre. New recruits were taught to cross their personal Rubicons in not shrinking back from inflicting violence by their own hands. They became immune to suffering by becoming satiated with it. It is of interest that it was apparently not necessary to threaten any perpetrator of a Nazi atrocity with punishment if he did not carry it out. Let us think hard about that – millions of people murdered and butchered by volunteers.

I am not, of course, drawing a parallel of deed, but I am drawing a parallel of similar, but inadvertent, indoctrination. We are well into the stage of being brutalized to accept violence in abstract. We are able to sit relaxed and comfortable and watch people being abused and killed on our television screen, and violence and indignity almost beyond belief paraded in some of our stores. What is next? It is the acceptance of specific violence. It is human beings in our community pitted against other human beings in our community. It is an escalation of inter-personal violence from childhood through adulthood.

It is not sufficient to come before this Commission and describe, or complain, or engage in specious arguments. We should come with constructive suggestions based upon our individual analysis of the situation. I therefore have several concrete proposals.

1. In the case of specific individual violence, legal protection is properly served by the assumption of innocence until proven guilty. In the case of the encouragement of violence in what

I have termed the abstract, we must substitute an attitude of guilty until proven innocent.

2. Arguments that the effects of violence are not mathematically proven on an adequately large statistical sample of the population are specious and cannot be accepted as a reason for inaction. The children of this country deserve to be given the benefit of the doubt, that the continuous viewing of scenes of violence and pornography is not beneficial to their happiness.

3. The contention that 'you don't have to watch television, or look at the bookshelves' is unacceptable. I have as much right to go into a drug store as anybody else, without having a decision imposed upon me. As for television, its programs are, in effect, guests in my home and, like any guest, there is a certain level of conduct expected. I do not invite incompatible guests. At the present time, programs too often slither into our homes before we are aware of what they contain. A description of any violence included should be mentioned and graded beforehand.

4. Lastly, and most importantly, we require a dedication to personal responsibility. We have had an example of its effectiveness this last week with the removal of objectionable magazines upon the decision of the president of a chain of stores.

I have watched programs on television which have included fighting with chains, bondage, sexual abuse, and have wondered if this represents the morality of the executives of advertising companies which sponsor it. I would suggest, therefore, that, in the course of a program, the sponsors indicate that they are aware of the program content and that it meets the personal standards of the executives whose names are shown on the screen.

And finally, there should be no decision maker 'unavailable for comment' when his task is to select material in the public sector, such as school books.

They, and all the rest of us, must accept personal responsibilities in this difficult and dangerous area.

Thank you.

*Michael Blurton*

## **Orangeville and District University Women's Club Orangeville**

This brief is submitted by the Orangeville and District University Women's Club to The Royal Commission on Violence in the Media. The Orangeville and District University Women's Club conducted a survey from October, 1975, until February, 1976, of programs offered on television and movies offered by the local Orangeville Theatre. As members have children, particular attention was paid to prime children's viewing hours. At the end of the survey, several disturbing facts became evident which resulted in this brief.

### **Adult Programs**

Adult programs were those designated as being shown after 9 p.m. The general theme of violence was consistent throughout, showing a constant lack of regard for the rights of others, the value of human life and respect for authority. Many evenings, there was no other choice on television except among violent programs. The following were found to be specifically objectionable.

#### *Kojak*

From October, 1975, until February, 1976, the following scenes of violence were observed on this program:

– street gang killings; emphasis on young gangs; murder; attempted murder; tough cops; how to file a registration for a gun; cars bursting into flames while occupants were inside with no chance of escape; questionable language becoming more and more commonplace.

#### *Starsky and Hutch*

From October, 1975, until February, 1976, the following scenes of violence were observed on this program:

– murder of a 16-year-old; loan shark beating, the complete preparation of a heroin injection from the mixing of the heroin to the administration of the needle itself; a policeman being blown up.

#### *Bronk*

Only a single episode of this program was reported, during which 28 people were killed when a bomb went off in a plane, as well as a man being run over by a plane.

These are only a few of many repetitious incidents from these programs. All problems were solved violently, with sex and age having little bearing on the degree of violence. It was generally felt, as the survey progressed during the viewing season, that many programs became more violent in content.

#### *CBC Sunday Night Performance*

This program is specifically mentioned because of objections to the excessive use of vile language. The choice of plays, with their nude scenes, were also in questionable taste for members of the survey. These programs were advertised as the 'best of Canadian talent'. So many found these programs objectionable that the question of who had jurisdiction in selecting them for viewing was raised.

### **Children's Television Programs**

Prime children's viewing hours were designated to be from 4 p.m. until 9 p.m. Daytime viewing by pre-schoolers was not considered as it was felt adult supervision would be available. Of prime concern were the hours from 4:30 p.m. until 7 p.m. when adult supervision was at a minimum because of meal preparation. There were several disturbing elements which became evident during the survey.

#### *Starsky and Hutch*

On October 3, 1975, on CHCH-TV Hamilton, at 5 p.m., this program showed gangland style kidnapping and beatings. The person was beaten full face into the camera. The preparation of a heroin needle was shown step by step on the screen with the final act being the administration of the needle into the arm. There was also an attempted murder.

This program has since been removed from this time slot after two-and-one-half months, and is now shown after 9 p.m. Enquiries as to why it was removed have not been answered, nor was a letter

from a member objecting to the program being shown at this hour acknowledged. It might hopefully be assumed that enough pressure was put on the station by concerned adults to have caused them to cancel it at this hour.

### *Ironside*

Monday to Friday, CFTO Toronto, 5 p.m. This program demonstrates another problem with children's prime viewing hours. This program was originally considered an adult crime show and shown after 9 p.m., once a week. Now, as a re-run, it is on children's prime time every day. Crime, murder, rape, kidnapping and acts of violence are as much a part of this program now as when it was originally shown. Violent adult programs today become children's viewing programs next season.

### *Commercials*

Programs specifically made for children were generally considered acceptable, if not inspirational or challenging to the child's mind. Riders or commercials used during these children's programs to promote programs of a violent nature later in the evening drew much concern. There were two areas of concern:

a) Adults have no control or supervision over these commercials. Young children are exposed to scenes of violence and language objected to by many parents.

b) The commercials are usually the most violent scenes from the program and, when taken out of context, can be either upsetting to younger children or leave them with the impression that this is normal behaviour. For example, on January 14, 1976, on Global television at 5 p.m., the program shown was *Hogan's Heroes*. Riders from *The Blue Knight* were used as commercials. Scenes showed a policeman barely escaping being run over by a car. 'Get the hell out of here' was also used during this commercial.

c) The advertisement of beer on children or family-type programs also caused concern. Sunday, February 29, 1976, CHCH-TV Hamilton showed the family film *The Sound of Music*. It was strongly felt that beer commercials on this program were unnecessary and contrary to the concern expressed by many groups as to the

growing incidence of alcoholism among young people.

### *Sports on Television*

Since this survey was undertaken, action has been taken by the government regarding violence in hockey. We strongly endorse this policy. We would also recommend that the coaches, managers and owners also be indicted. They must be made to assume the responsibility for the actions of their players. We would also recommend that the television screen become blank whenever a conflict occurs. If the players realized they were not getting television coverage, they might not be so anxious to brawl. It would also enable parents, who are concerned about the influence this type of action might have on their children, to have control.

### *Movies*

During Christmas week, a children's move, *Benjie* was offered at our local theatre. Film clips from the next attraction, *Jaws*, were shown at this children's special showing. Younger children, who were not normally allowed to attend movies, were upset by this preview. Parents approached the manager with their objections, and were assured this would not occur again. In a small town, this type of action is possible, but it was felt in a larger centre this would not be so. A general policy regarding riders of forthcoming attractions being shown at special children's shows should be established.

### **Values, Attitudes and Perception of Violence on Television**

The adults who prepared this brief, as well as those of the Commission, were not exposed to television as children. We do not know what effect constant exposure to seeing violent acts committed can have on young minds. Only now are beginning surveys being done. One survey recently released conducted by Dr. Anne R. Sommers of Rutgers University and reported in *The New England Journal of Medicine* describes programs of violence as 'pollution of the mind' which has contributed to an epidemic of youthful violence that seriously threatens the health of



American youth'. Dr. Sommers, a community health specialist, cited statistics showing an alarming increase in violent deaths of young people age 15 – 24. Suicide, murder and robbery by young children had increased alarmingly. 'For an alarming number of young people, violence has become a way of life.' In December 1975, Dr. M. R. Rothenburg of the University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle, a pediatric psychiatrist, reported in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 'the time is long past due for a major organized cry of protest from the medical profession in relation to what, in political terms, is a national scandal'.

Although these are American reports, it is felt they can be applied to Canadian young people as well, as many of the same violent programs are viewed by both groups.

Certain underlying attitudes were observed on these programs which caused concern as to their long-range effect on young minds: lack of respect for authority; very often the hero(es) openly disobey superiors and yet come out on 'top' of a situation.

Often, superiors are made to look like fools or blundering idiots in the process. The message comes clearly across that you don't have to do what someone in authority tells you. The implications of this are very frightening.

Because television is visual, constant exposure to violence makes us immune and insensitive to it. There is a subliminal psychological effect taking place. One member of the survey team reported that her children became extremely upset when an animal was in danger or hurt on *Disneyland* but viewed with complete dispassion a violent crime scene where humans were involved. Small children, with limited experience of life, view these actions as normal behaviour. Violence is too often used as a problem-solving device. This too can be regarded as normal behaviour.

A survey of policemen in Orangeville was conducted. They were asked to comment on television police shows and the effect on their image. They were unanimous in feeling the programs did not portray the role of policemen accurately. All objected to being shown as tough, gun-toting, shoot-first-ask-questions-later characters. They also worried that the victims of crimes

on television always appear dead. To the lunatic fringe of society, they felt this was particularly dangerous. It was also felt that television police programs 'gave people the false impression that a cop is out to get them. Young people are being conditioned into thinking there will be a degree of violence toward them. They believe their rights as an individual will be abused. A policeman is as responsible to the offender as he is to society. Unfortunately, television destroys this belief and with it the positive image of the police.' Parental supervision of television programs was stressed by all the Orangeville police interviewed.

### General Summary and Recommendations

As the young people of today are the adults of tomorrow, the ODUWC feels very strongly that something should be done regarding the violence on television. Television could be the greatest tool in educating young minds. Unfortunately, it was generally felt that it was being used to destroy rather than build. In a highly competitive society, where we stress winning, we encourage conflict and aggressive behaviour. So often, the television message is: if you can't win within the framework of the rules, then break the rules. We must learn to develop pride and status based on decent standards. Crime must not be made attractive as it is on television today. The social status of wealth, even if ill-gained, and even if the criminal is caught, must be eliminated. Pride in being reliable, trustworthy and honest should be re-established as important life standards. These lessons could be incorporated into television programs just as easily as the wrong lessons are stressed today.

### Recommendations

- that 4:30 to 9 p.m. every evening should be set aside as family viewing hours with non-violent programs being shown. We highly recommend television Ontario programs and feel many of these types of programs could be expanded;
- that censorship is not recommended but violent programs originating in the U.S. should not be purchased by Canadian stations. We realize these can still be viewed on American television stations

but feel if the Canadian market was closed completely to these shows it would not be long before an acceptable change in programming would result with the loss of Canadian revenue;

- that all liquor and beer commercials be removed from family-type programs;
- that some form of program coding or classification be established that would enable people, particularly parents, to know the type of program being offered;
- that commercials shown during family viewing hours are not those of adult programs to be shown later in the evening;
- that re-runs of television shows during family viewing hours be carefully selected;
- that criminal charges continue to be laid when unnecessary violence occurs during sports events, but be extended to include coaches, managers and owners as being responsible for the actions of their players;
- that the television screen become blank whenever a fight occurs during a sports event;
- that, when a special children's show is being presented at a cinema, previews of forthcoming attractions be deleted;
- that the government take immediate action regarding television programming in Canada. The response of the public to the Commission clearly demonstrates that the Canadian public wants action now. Leadership and direction must come as a result of the Commission.

*Orangeville and District University Women's Club*

## **Canadian Mental Health Association, Timmings-Porcupine Branch**

In view of the fact that in the space of one year (1973 - 74), in the City of Timmings, criminal offenses have gone up by 34.5 per cent and offences under statutes up by 58 per cent, we gave serious consideration as to what effect the media has in influencing some of these offenders and at what stage of life does the media start influencing individuals.

We began by discussing what would affect young children, as many ideas are instilled at an early age and can be the impetus for offences at a later age level. We found that seeds of violence could be sown in young minds of pre-school children who watch television programs such as presumably harmless cartoons of the nature of the *Bugs Bunny - Roadrunner* type where they are exposed to extraordinary violent happenings to the characters in the series. The same applies to comic books; it is amazing how many are composed of violent actions and totally devoid of humour yet fall in the category of comic books on sale at a multitude of outlets throughout the city.

For juveniles, 10 to 16 years of age, who stay up later and are exposed to more adult television programs, we felt that, apart from viewing particular shows which display gang fights, drug scenes and glamorizes driving at excessive speeds, they are also exposed to beer ads depicting and implying that this is an assured way of being popular and having a marvellous time, which can impress some young people to the point of starting to drink alcoholic beverages at an extremely young age. Promos of coming shows at theatres showing the goriest scenes in the show in order to attract attention can also affect this age group by arousing their curiosity and desire to emulate some of the characters and their actions. They view, as well, many advertisements that use sex stimulation, giving them the impression that, if they use certain products, they will immediately be surrounded by beautiful women, or handsome men, as the case may be, and have an abundance of happy sexual experiences.

As far as newspapers may affect this age group, the ads for shows are often presented in an erotic or violent fashion, again appealing to animal

instincts in these young persons. The marquee displays at theatres follow the same line to attract. This is an age for boys and girls when hero worship is at a high, and copying the actions of their particular heroes, if not actually attempted then, is certainly thought of to be done later, whether it be driving at excessive speeds, taking drugs, drinking alcoholic beverages or indulging in sex.

Publicity via the media in regards to hijacking of planes seemed to have brought on a rash of these occurrences, as did the same kind of publicity involving abductions. Although there has been no case of hijacking of planes here, there have been a few cases of abduction, and we can only wonder whether the publicity on other cases might not have been the factors which brought about these occurrences here.

For the psychotic person, the viewing of rape scenes or murder plots on television or reading in newspapers the details of such happenings, may be enough to trigger them to committing the same acts. There have been a few unsolved murders in Timmins which could well have been committed by this type of person influenced by what they had seen or read.

Although not every case can be blamed on violence in the media, it is possible that some cases of speeding, heavy drinking, assault, robbery, rape, racism, and even murder, could stem from ideas impressed on persons of various ages in the glamorization of such actions on television programs, movie shows, magazines, advertisements in all media, books in our schools and in our public libraries and even on the national news.

It is a shame that in the pursuit of the almighty dollar, the media appears to have no qualms in portraying the 'good life' through ads, articles and programs promoting the use of alcoholic beverages, encouraging driving at excessive speeds, insinuating that the sex enjoyment comes along with many products and glamorizing law-breakers (as was done with the *Bonnie and Clyde* movie for example). The same may be said for the use of drugs as some successful actors, writers, musicians and other glamorous professionals have let it be known through talk shows on television and radio and magazine articles, that at some time or other

they were users of marijuana and other drugs. For those who are easily impressed, all the above mentioned may influence their actions within these spheres in the belief that they too will become successful and lead a carefree, sophisticated existence if they follow suit.

The fact that there is an uprise in marriage breakups and an increasing incidence of women leaving their children, may in some instances be attributed to the media exhorting successful career persons with the inference that the role of house-keeping, the raising of children, and marriage itself is a pretty humdrum way of life.

With the increase of persons having mental breakdowns, we feel that it would be beneficial to have happier endings to movies about psychotic persons, rather than have the psychotic character shown at the end as a violent, irreparably insane person. Former psychiatric patients who are functioning well but remain sensitive about their past illness, fear that those about them may think of them as characterized in the movie. Some schizophrenic persons identify with violent actions viewed on television or at the movies to the point of actually breaking down and committing violent acts.

Although we do not wish to infringe on the rights of individuals, we would like to put forward a few recommendations that, if implemented, we feel could benefit society as a whole.

1. Violence should be removed from cartoons and any programs aimed at pre-school children.
2. Comic books based on violent actions should be removed from the market; if they are not funny, they should not have been categorized as comic books in the first place.
3. Better screening process should be implemented for youngsters' television programs, movies and comic books.
4. Limit of percentage of shows containing violence should be lowered, and time slotting of these shows should be at a later hour.
5. Use of ID card with photo of owner should be enforced at cinemas as under-age persons are getting in to see restricted shows by using ID cards borrowed from older friends. This is an area we feel policemen could check periodically to see if theatre personnel are being conscientious about this matter.

6. We also feel that policemen should make regular calls on licenced beverage establishments to ensure under-age persons are not imbibing.

7. Because of a fast growth increase in resident population, as well as a transient population because of industrial expansion in Timmins, and particularly because of the enormous increase in the rate of crime in this city, we feel it is imperative to add to our police force as soon as possible.

8. Theatres should be asked to display more pleasant scenes of movies in their ads and on marquees. Television ads for restricted movies should not be shown until after 10 p.m.

9. We feel curfews of 9 p.m. for children aged 12 and under, and 11 p.m. for 13-16-year-olds would not be unreasonable and might help to curb vandalism which is attributed mostly to this age group.

10. Magazines such as *Playboy*, *Playgirl*, et cetera and types with covers depicting erotic or violent scenes should be kept in a special section for adults only in outlets where these are sold.

11. The Boards of Education should check school libraries to ensure that sex books of an erotic and explicit nature are not stocked on their shelves.

12. Public libraries should keep erotic and crime books out of reach of young children, and make sure these books are loaned out to adults only with a show of ID cards if necessary. Book stores should be made to adhere to these same rules.

13. Technical details of crimes should not be explained in such detail as to give information to a disturbed person to carry out the same crime.

14. ID cards should be made compulsory and not available till the age of 18.

*Mrs. Shirley Rokeby, President*

*Committee:*

*Martha Laughren – Chairperson*

*Dennis Coombes – Member*

*Florence Denison – Member*

## **Greg Duffell Scarborough**

### **Animated Cartoons**

It was almost inevitable that, when The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry was established by the Ontario Government, the realm of the social acceptability of a long standing member of the motion picture industry – the animated cartoon – should be subjected to analysis and criticism.

At the offset of the campaign, on CHUM-FM's radio broadcast *In Toronto*, His Honour Judge Lucien Beaulieu stated that if the Commission found that some television programs were suspected to be injurious to the mental health or caused violent reactions in viewers, the Commission would stress that these programs be taken off the air. He went further to say that the most violent program on Canadian television was the *Bugs Bunny – Roadrunner* hour. This was not a statement made isolating children's programs, but one including all adult programs.

My name is Greg Duffell and I am an animator, one who does the drawings for animated cartoons. I am also knowledgeable on the topic of the history of animation and have studied the work of some of the great cartoon directors and animators of the past 50 to 70 years.

I assure the Commission that I have nothing financially to gain by defending some of the animation companies, as 90 per cent of these firms are no longer in operation. It is not the studios that I defend, but the high quality of entertainment which the animation teams produced mainly between the years 1928 and 1962.

First, a bit of background, which I will try to make as brief and concise as possible.

The major Hollywood teams were those of Disney, Warner Brothers, Metro Goldwyn Mayer and the Walter Lantz studio.

Walt Disney created Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Goofy and many other cartoon stars, using them primarily in the cartoon short subjects the studio produced, mainly between 1926 and 1955.

The Warner Brothers cartoon studio popularized such Hollywood immortals as the Academy Award-winning Bugs Bunny, Speedy



Gonzales and Tweety and Sylvester, as well as Porky Pig, Daffy Duck and Elmer Fudd. It is mainly against these characters that criticism is lodged concerning what many think is excessive, damaging, sadistic violence. They have also been the world's most successful and beloved characters, at some points rivalling Disney's short-cartoon popularity.

Metro Goldwyn Mayer produced *The Tom and Jerry* series which proved to have greater popularity than any of their other characters. Director Tex Avery produced a series of cartoons there also that were marked by incredibly fast pacing, employing rapid-fire gags covering a variety of taboos and often using a surreal and hilarious violence. These films are very rarely seen on television today.

Lantz studios produced the unremarkable *Woody Woodpecker* series as well as a number of other borderline case cartoons of irregular quality: some good, some bad.

On Canadian television we mainly see, of the old cartoons, the Warner ones. There are others that, after the advent of television and cost-cutting, were flooding the ravenous television market – from 1958's *Ruff and Reddy*, to the superhero craze of the mid-Sixties, to the Seventies' curse of the nauseating, if relatively violence-free, cartoon reprises of horrendous prime-time shows like *The Brady Bunch* and *The Partridge Family* and *2000 A.D.* If the live-action show was a good one, like *Star Trek*, all trace disappeared when going through the Seventies' 'cartoon machine'.

The only watchable series produced through the Sixties and Seventies were *The Bullwinkle Show* (written by some witty writers who later went on to write and produce Mary Tyler Moore's television shows) and *The Pink Panther Show*, which have had, due to thoughtful and clever writing, and, in the case of the latter, decent animation, phenomenal world-wide success. There is what some would call (if they had their eyes specifically on the look-out), violence in these two television series.

It is my contention that if the Commission deems these good cartoons violent and damaging to the psyche, which I have little doubt it will, the Commission will stress that films be banned from being broadcast on Canadian television.

Censorship is an overused word, but a good one to describe what condemning and exiling these films would be. We have already and are still going through rigorous criticism by many groups which have led to the banning, by overly sensitive racial observers and other groups and organizations who seem to be offended by almost anything, of what would seem to me to be harmless cartoons.

These groups don't accidentally happen upon what they deem race or sex discrimination in films. They seek it out and some of the time will dig very deeply into very obscure areas to find it. I believe some of what is said may be true and well-founded. Likewise, I believe the Commission may over-emphasize violence in cartoons and their potential damage to children and adults by being overly conscious of it.

Not all of the cartoons of *The Golden Age of Animation* would have been enjoyed by the Marquis de Sade, as some magazine articles would have the public believe. Some of the directors who made the cartoons which are often deemed excessively violent, racist, sexist, what have you, also made charmingly beautiful films, social comment films and satirical films in the cartoon genre. All the cartoons weren't good but the overwhelming majority were. In addition to banning their slapstick films, we would get rid of their other equally good offshoot work.

These articles would also have readers believe that the cartoons were made by a lower form of human intelligence. I have met the most illustrious directors of these great films and although none of them are alike, they are all very clever men – ranging from the unpretentious wit of Tex Avery to the educated comments of Chuck Jones. And believe me, all of these qualities reflect in their work.

Chuck Jones created *Roadrunner*, a series many critics describe as having 'more senseless violence per minute than any other cartoon'.<sup>1</sup> The latter comment in *Chatelaine* in 1974 was placed on their teaser photo spread on page 38. When the real text begins on page 100, the article tones down and, when trying to analyze, falls flat on its face in misunderstanding and contradiction: 'Take a better look at the *Roadrunner*, a Bugs Bunny segment that is widely admired by adults

for its skilful animation. The whole cartoon is pared down to its one basic ingredient: no dialogue, no characters besides the two protagonists, no distractions from the mutual mauling of the coyote and the bird, set on a stark, luridly pink-and-orange desert rockscape. Approximately every five seconds, the coyote is smashed by falling boulders, flattened by steam-rollers, fragmented by dynamite, and put through dozens of agonizing annihilations, from all of which he springs back amazingly unhurt.

"If you think it doesn't matter because it's 'just animals', consider for a moment that animals are used so extensively in cartoons precisely because very small children identify with them. The industry rationale is that the coyote provokes all the violence by his predatory role. Studies show that many young people are reassured by television that violence is often justifiable when it is 'provoked by wrongdoers'."<sup>2</sup>

One thing that is never mentioned in such articles is that these cartoons are fun and funny. Earlier in the article, the author finds difficulty in finding any examples of violence and even goes as far as admitting that of all the programs she was criticizing *Bugs Bunny* was the least harmful.

"Even the safest of television golden oldies prove to be laden with brutality. Most of us have a dim affection for the old *Bugs Bunny* cartoons; after all, weren't they a harmless and enjoyable part of the Saturday afternoon matinee ritual? Yes, and by the time most of us were going to the movies we were old enough to have some sort of context by which to put those cartoons in perspective. Now they're being gobbled up daily, by kids as young as two."<sup>3</sup>

The conclusion we must draw is that we should stop children under four from watching television, if we use the logic from the *Chatelaine* article. If the cartoons were 'a harmless and enjoyable part of the Saturday afternoon matinee ritual . . .' when the cartoons were made in the Forties and Fifties, there's no reason why they aren't now.

Chuck Jones, also director and producer of *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* and *Cricket in Times Square*, has, in the trade magazine *Funnyworld*, explained the *Roadrunner* series, at present, the most misunderstood cartoon series. The *Roadrunner* cartoons are not my favourite of

Jones's work but needless to say they are immensely popular with animation historians and more importantly with the public.

Here is the portion of the interview relevant to the brief, published in 1971:

Mike Barrier: "In your interview in *Psychology Today* (April, 1968,), you mentioned the disciplines you imposed on yourself, the very sparse leeway you allowed yourself on what the roadrunner and coyote could do. Would you describe those disciplines?"

Chuck Jones: "The basic one, right away, was that the roadrunner was a roadrunner, and therefore stayed on the road. You make up your own rules as you go along . . . but having made them up, you must adhere to them. I think the same was true of Chaplin's movies, in that his costume did not vary. Marcel Marceau allows himself nothing on the stage except a couple of blocks. So, allowing it's a roadrunner, the first rule is that he only leaves the road when he's lured off, by the simple device of drawing a white line, or a detour, or something of this kind.

"Second, the coyote must never be injured by the roadrunner: he always injures himself. The coyote is what all of us would like to be, a perfectionist in whatever we'd like to accomplish, and yet, in the coyote's case, there's always a slight error. That's what usually happens. The roadrunner never enters into it, except perhaps coming up behind him and saying 'beep, beep', which seems not too violent.

"Third, the cartoons were set in the American southwest desert, and, although we used a lot of different styles in the pictures, in the backgrounds and such, it always had to be in that context. As we went along, the coyote's primary enemy became not even explosions, but gravity. Speed and gravity soon became basic factors in our series.

"Fourth, the sympathy always had to be with the coyote. The coyote was never hurt or in pain, he was insulted, as most of us are when we suffer misfortune . . ."

Mike Barrier: "A girl I know who's not too interested in animation referred to the *Roadrunner* cartoons just recently as the 'most sadistic' cartoons, and I've heard other criticism of the

violence in cartoons. I wonder how you'd reply to such criticism?"

Chuck Jones: "There's no completely convincing way of replying. I think one question you might ask her is what she thinks of the James Thurber cartoon of the duellist lopping off another man's head and calling 'touché?' Or what she thinks of the original story of *The Three Little Pigs*, in which the wolf, after eating the other two little pigs, actually goes down the chimney and is boiled to death and eaten by the third little pig, which made the third pig a sort of second-degree cannibal? All the Hans Christian Andersen stories, the Laurel and Hardy comedies, and early Chaplin, the very things I think she probably would adore – I'm curious what she would think about such 'violence.'

"When I lecture at universities, I find that people usually talk about this when they're doing a term paper on motion pictures and pick out certain things that they feel are indicative of black-and-white values. Or else they're graduate students in teaching. From my viewpoint, I did what I thought was funny. Sometimes it was violent, sometimes it was not. But I can't think of any piece of human drama that isn't one of three things: it's violent, it's sexual or it's fantasy. It's pretty hard to think of anything else that's really interesting. The important point is the difference between meaningless violence and comic violence.

"What I did, I always tried to do for my own sake – I never thought much about the audience, I never made pictures for audiences – but for my own sake, I always tried to put a certain logic to it. It's a natural situation for a member of the dog family to chase a member of the bird family. It's no less natural for that situation to exist than it is for this lady you refer to to eat a porterhouse steak. If she objects to violence, perhaps she'd better go to a slaughterhouse and see exactly how that steak came into being. One of the funny things on radio here is a commercial by an outfit called Farmer John's, which packages sausages and bacon. 'Farmer John', they say, 'fattens his porkers (avoiding the word pig), in the Middle West and then brings them out to the coast alive, and then they're processed here.' Now processed means killing. Avoiding the use of the term kill

doesn't really change the matter at all. We are carnivores, we exist on that kind of violence.

"But I put down on film what seems to be funny, and I guess that's just about the size of it. There's simply no way to justify it. I believe that children – and many psychologists agree with this – find this a kind of release, providing it's funny. I don't much care for the Superman things. I know kids have tried to imitate Superman, but I don't think anyone's going to try to imitate the coyote. And they can't imitate the roadrunner."

Mike Barrier: "Do you see any line between the kinds of violence you used in your cartoons and the kind of violence Hanna and Barbera used in their *Tom and Jerry* cartoons?"

Chuck Jones: "The distinction for me was that they would use a kind of personal damage. For example, Jerry might drive a golfball right through Tom's teeth and all of Tom's teeth would break and fall out. To me, that's pretty painful. Now, the coyote falling 8,000 feet and landing, and getting up immediately, that seems to me to be a broad humour."<sup>4</sup>

I might add that one-third of the *Roadrunner* cartoons now in release are inept sequels to Jones's, produced under inferior direction made to beef up the *Roadrunner* roster for the *Roadrunner* television show in 1965. These tend to be uncharacteristic.

I think Chuck Jones's statement about the futility of imitating cartoon characters by children is an important one to the Commission. It is more likely children would imitate live characters like Superman or Batman, rather than cartoon characters. The only animated character I can think of that children would imitate would be Popeye, a cartoon not shown regularly on television in the last seven to ten years.

The cartoons I have mentioned in my brief so far, I believe, do not have sadistic tendencies, tendencies I would imagine would have an effect on children. Sadism is an abnormal delight in cruelty and I have not seen this penchant in any Disney or Warner Brothers cartoons, those most seen on Canadian television.

There are some cartoons which have a bent towards sadism, in my opinion. The theatrically produced *Herman and Katnip* series made by Paramount (released by Harvey films) is such a

series which tends to be as tasteless as it is offensive. These films are very rarely shown on our home screens.

Internationally animated cartoons have, in recent years, been threatened with censorship and in some cases actually been banned. One case, in England, was the *Tom and Jerry* series, when a member of Parliament proposed the series (phenomenally popular among the young and old alike in Britain) be banned from being shown on British television. Edward Heath, then Prime Minister, stated that *Tom and Jerry* was one of his favourite programs on the BBC and suggested it be kept on the air.

In Sweden, the censor has cut many Disney films because of supposed violence. The newest cartoon feature from the Disney studio *Robin Hood*, was censored, plus a couple of hour-long compilations of Disney shorts starring previously-uncharged personalities such as Mickey Mouse and Goofy. The reasons for both actions: violence. These are shown, not on Swedish television, but in the cinema.

The sudden disappearances of all Warner cartoons from the Toronto area, including the highly-rated *Bugs Bunny Show* (displaced from its traditional Cross-Canada 5 p.m. Saturday airing) suggests maybe banning has already hit Canada. However, this is purely assumption.

I would very much hope that the Commission will examine the positive sides of good cartoons before generally classifying and condemning what I, and millions of other people around the world, consider great entertainment films. I have seen these films viewed in four countries of different cultures and sometimes language than their country of origin. They are uniformly greeted with glee. They are, at best, an endless source of laughter, fun, enjoyment and sometimes enlightenment and should not be allowed to be dismissed in disgrace. To me, it is the factory-produced, humourless, inartistic rubbish that should be stringently controlled. Shows such as *Hong Kong Phooey*, *Jeannie*, *Scooby-Doo*, *Yogi's Gang*, and the endless cartoon super-hero junk are more dangerous to viewers through their sheer mindlessness and complete lack of any wit or humour, a quality which abounds in the very cartoons I have previously talked at length about.

I hope cartoons are not used as one of the scapegoats for some of the violence prevalent in our society. It seems to me that one of cartoons' major effects is laughter, something we will need an increasing amount of as the years go by.

*Greg Duffell*

### Endnotes

- 1 *Chatelaine*, September, 1974, page 38: *Kids and TV*: Michele Landsberg.
- 2 *Chatelaine*, September, 1974, page 101: *Kids and TV*: Michele Landsberg.
- 3 *Chatelaine*, September, 1974, page 38: *Kids and TV*: Michele Landsberg.
- 4 *Funnyworld*, Spring, 1971, page 14: edited by Milt Gray and Mike Barrier.



## **Pensioners Concerned (Canada) Inc. Toronto**

We repudiate the claims of television producers and directors:

- that elderly people are least impressed by degree of violence.

We have found no evidence to justify this statement, although it is possible that viewing, hearing and reading violent presentations are not likely to lead to much overt violent action among older groups for obvious reasons. However, there is evidence that there are other undesirable effects: restricted mobility, fearful outlooks and unhealthy attitudes towards those who are typed as violent.

- that because usually the good guys are shown as winning over the bad guys, the viewer is provided with reassurance as an escapism.

The good guys can be morally wrong, too, in many circumstances depicted by acting out a response in an anti-social manner.

- that situations depicting conflict resolutions through violence are basic to mass entertainment.

Even if it were true; do they suggest that it improves social behaviour? Furthermore, there are other more human and socially useful ways of resolving situations of confrontation.

We believe that television, particularly, is taking over much of the parents' teaching function with respect to social behaviour in a great many homes. The onus then on the media is to present programs which have constructive functions. Parents should also help by instilling concern for others in their children and should not model aggressive behaviour themselves.

To briefly sum up – too much time and space in all types of mass media communication is devoted to an excessive preoccupation with unnatural death and violent action and compels those who are supposed to benefit to witness perverted demonstrations of what should be a good society.

Television and newspapers are two media sources on which seniors rely principally to provide indoor mental comfort, relaxation, information, and stimulation, and if any action is

recommended to lessen the violence content, it should be predominantly in these two media.

*Harry W. Jones*

*Chairman – Brief Committee*

**The Wingham Advance-Times  
The Listowel Banner  
The Mount Forest Confederate  
Wingham**

Since violence is such an obvious fact of the times in which we live, the communications media cannot ignore its presence. The question we face, of course, is what acts of violence should be reported, and in what detail should they be described.

As the publisher of rural community newspapers I have been fortunate enough to spend most of my life in areas where acts of violence have been rare, but obviously those blessed years are passing. Within recent months our Western Ontario communities have been deeply shocked by the violation and murder of several elderly women.

There is no way in which our newspapers can ignore or remain silent about such events. Residents of our towns have a right to know what dangers do exist and thus what measures may be taken as self-protection. Without factual news reports the inevitable spread of rumor could lead to panic.

There are, however, limits to which every responsible news source should bind itself.

This morning's edition of one Western Ontario daily newspaper carried a detailed story of the inquest into the circumstances surrounding a shooting and suicide a few weeks ago in an Ottawa school. What purpose can possibly be served by recounting the precise way in which a young girl was handcuffed to a bed and how many times she was stabbed? It was necessary to the proper conduct of the hearing that the murderer's diary be read to the jury, but I have grave doubts about the need to recount all the evidence of a tragically twisted mind for the edification of newspaper readers.

*Barry Wenger*  
*Publisher*

**Brian J. Bigelow**

Curiously enough, the lack of frankness in the portrayal of violence seems more damaging than the real thing. Violence becomes attractive if you do not identify too strongly with the victims. No one laughs at a gruesome automobile crash, but most people have a good time watching a *Roadrunner* cartoon, especially if he revives time and again after impossible odds of survival. The distinction of reality and fantasy is clearest in cartoons. Television violence, on the other hand, tends to lose this important distinction all too often. For example, parents often leave the room when exposed to live news bulletins which expose the horror of the Middle East conflict.

*Brian J. Bigelow*  
*Behavioural Consultant*  
*Lakehead Board of Education*

**The Children's Broadcast Institute  
Toronto**

In the end, we think that heavy emphasis should be placed on the importance of parents sharing the television experience with their children to provide them with the kind of security they have when, nestled in the arms of mother or father, they listen to fairy tales being read to them.

*The Children's Broadcast Institute*

**La Citadelle Secondary School  
Cornwall**

Whereas a number of groups whose purpose is to reduce the amount of violence on television presently exist, we recommend that the provincial or federal government subsidize these organizations.

Whereas the people, specifically parents, are not well-informed on this problem which closely affects them, we recommend a widespread awareness campaign on a national scale.

Whereas the majority of violence programs emanate from the United States, we recommend that the CRTC oblige Radio-Canada, CTV, TVO and Global not to buy these programs any longer.

Whereas the Canadian public watch half the violence programs on American channels, we recommend that Canadians not be able to pick up the American channels.

*Guy Poirier*  
*Minister of Cultural Affairs*

**Communication Arts Division  
St. Clair College of Applied  
Arts & Technology  
Windsor**

... the gravest danger is that some in our society might find attractive the proposal (in the Commission's Interim Report) for 'special provisions against the distribution and sale of media content objectionable on the grounds of violence'. Because of its surface attractiveness, this proposal is possibly the most objectionable of those set forth in the Interim Report. Even if one were to take the most charitable view of governmental integrity and assume that violent content alone would remain the criterion, this would set no mind at ease. Reactions against governmental policy are sometimes violent. The Sharpesville Massacre in South Africa was a violent encounter – and for reporting it, *Time* magazine was banned from that country. Given such powers, might not a bureaucratic administrator judge as unsuitable for the public such violence as has taken place in recent years in the Quebec construction industry, in Vancouver's Gastown, in Toronto's Yorkville, in demonstrations outside U.S. consulates, or those by farmers in Saskatchewan?

*David Bradley*  
*Chairman*

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church  
Guelph**

We believe that the kind of violence that the media can – and do – stimulate is a breach of what the Common Law used to call 'The King's Peace'. In essence, this meant that an ordinary citizen was entitled to stay in his home free from robbers, arsonists or kidnappers, use the King's highway

free of robbers and murderers, and that women and young children were entitled to be free from sexual attacks. The notion of The King's Peace supplanted the old ideas of private vengeance, decreeing that a violent crime was an assault on the King himself because the citizen should be able to rely on the peace of the realm.

This simple idea that we should be able to go about our daily business without being victims of assaults of various kinds is what we think should concern the Commission. Unfortunately, the media promote this kind of violence regularly.

*Donald Cox*  
*Clara M. Marett*

**Cecile Trottier  
Kapuskasing**

Good movies used to be made with violence used as a dash of salt in a recipe. Now they are using violence for the main course ... movies such as *Cry for Mercy* and *Born Losers* to name but two, could very well bear the title: *How to Rape a Woman and Get Away With It*.

*Mrs. Cecile Trottier*

**Shamrock Co-operative Nursery School  
Bridgenorth**

Our opposition to violence in the media lies in the nature of abuse to immature, growing, or developing minds, not yet capable of handling the subtle difference between myth and reality.

*Iris M. McKay*  
*Supervisor*

**University of Guelph  
Department of Sociology and  
Anthropology**

When a bank robber brandishes a gun, the bad guy in a wrestling contest appears to repeatedly foul his opponent, or a scheming wife poisons her husband, these portrayals do not generate

emulation because viewers generally do not identify with such characters.

On the other hand, when the alleged hero of a story displays violence in achieving legitimate goals, violence itself is legitimated. For example, when official agents of the state (police or inspectors) or clergy are depicted as behaving in a violent manner, the viewer's use of similar tactics is likely to be encouraged.

*Robert C. Kaill*  
*Assistant Professor*

### **Robert Franchville** **Scarborough**

I think that violence in hockey should be abolished. The game of hockey is to be played and not bleeding or heaving sticks.

Too many parents push their children so hard that they get so frustrated that they fight. Vince Lombardi said: "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing." Also the swearing at the officials. I think that if a coach uses abusive language, he should be suspended for eight or more games. In talking to officials, it is also distressing to learn how much abuse they receive from most coaches. It is impossible to expect boys to learn respect for officials if the coaches don't set a good example. Violence in hockey is crazy – if the children see a big fight on television, their first image is to imitate. Clarence Campbell said: "If you take fighting out of hockey, no one would come to any of the games." The game of hockey is a game, and if we don't be careful something drastic is going to happen. The NHL has never given thought to a match penalty for fights. I think that a game misconduct would be appropriate for a penalty for fighting. In any hockey, if you get into a fight, you should be taken out of that game and two more.

*Robert Franchville*

### **Lee Morita** **Toronto**

I believe that the player who gets involved in a fight should be removed immediately from the game. Fighting is not part of the game, but some

leagues think it is, such as the OHA, MTHL and the NHL. Those are only a few leagues, there are many more. MTHL is one of the worst ones. I went up to play for a MTHL team and in 14 minutes, a fight was on its way. The referee only gave five minute penalties to each player; I think the players should have been given a game misconduct, and what is even worse, after the game in the dressing-room, the players talked about how they fought!

Violence in amateur hockey has gone up every year and the referees are not doing anything about it. I think the rules should be stricter. If the rules are not going to be made stricter, and violence in amateur hockey keeps on going up, pretty soon, amateur hockey could be wiped out.

*Lee Morita*

### **Kirk Stephenson** **Utterson**

I would like to introduce myself. I am a student who watched your film on violence.

My opinion on this film wouldn't be the best, but I think violence is sort of groovy. Of course, there are a few programs which seem to affect a lot of young children. Such programs cause kids to rough their playmates up and maybe even cause serious trouble. I believe that *Bugs Bunny* is too violent for young viewers because you see the coyote in this cartoon get blown up by bombs, get thrown off cliffs, and get run down by mac trucks. And afterwards he walks away alive but a little dizzy. This is a bad example for children to watch and I can now see why this program was erased from most channels on the air.

Another ridiculous program is *Sesame Street*. I watched it a couple of times and in some parts of the show they had crazy things on that wouldn't teach a child anything. But also there are parts which might help the youngsters. Like counting from one to ten forwards and backwards.

I am glad that you would take the time to read my letter.

*Kirk Stephenson*



## **Mary Ferguson Guelph**

... if the government will not support Channel 19 as it now is, a station such as the U.S. Channel 17 should be established in Canada for Canadians.

*Mrs. Mary Ferguson*

## **The Sault Ste. Marie Regional Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada**

It is our recommendation that theatre managers review the various classifications of movies with their staff members and instruct them to adhere to the recommended age limits. Young persons reaching adulthood at age 18 are required to provide suitable identification and proof of age when participating in other activities restricted to adults such as voting, and being served in a cocktail lounge. Theatres should therefore have the right to demand similar identification for admittance to restricted movies. We would further recommend that all students carry an identification card which contains a photograph as well as date of birth.

*Mrs. G. E. Nori, Chairman*

*Mrs. C. Holland, Committee Chairman*

## **Willard Nuss Fanshawe College London**

... When television produces poison for our children's minds, shouldn't it be removed?

*Willard Nuss*

## **University Women's Club Peterborough**

Battle, murder and sudden death have been with us since Cain killed Abel. The Romans used to enjoy watching gladiators fight to the death and Elizabethans took their children to each hanging,

drawing and quartering. The last public hanging in the British Empire was in Ontario as recently as the mid-nineteenth century, and today such crowds will gather to watch a demented sniper in action that ambulances cannot get through to the victims. Such historical examples have often been cited as proof that violence is part of the human condition, has always been with us, and thus need not be challenged. It is our belief that such comments are invalid. One cannot draw such incidents from their related social contexts and make such generalized assumptions. They represented one small facet of their social time and their importance and impact can be judged only in terms of the complete sociological picture of the era.

*Joyce Lewis and Donna Geddes  
Executive Members*

## **Toronto Filmmakers' Co-Op Toronto**

I feel that a Film Classification Board would be ... beneficial to both the public and the filmmakers.

The most violent and brutal scene that I can recall seeing on any form of media was in 1970, when the camera witnessed the cold-blooded execution of a Viet Cong by a Vietnamese sergeant.

Later the media gained access to another brutal slaying that had taken place five years previously: the John Kennedy assassination has now been shown to us in vivid colour through the film footage of Abraham Zupruder, footage which for many years had been felt to be unfit for public viewing.

These, along with the Oswald and Robert Kennedy assassinations, are to me the most brutal media footage that I have witnessed and in all cases they come from a culture foreign to my own – the same culture that brings us *Kojak*, *Hawaii Five-O* and *SWAT*, and controls a vast portion of our television viewing time. The same culture that brought us *The Exorcist*, *Jaws*, *Texas Chain-Saw Massacre* and *Cut Throat*, and controls 96 per cent of the viewing time in our movie houses.

*Bill Boyle*

**Lynne Thornburg**

## **The Effects of Violence as It Relates to the Victimization of Women in the Media**

Objects or people are selected as suitable targets of aggression/violence in the process of socialization. Children learn from their parents and communities who to dislike, and how to demonstrate their dislike.

It is a feminist position that women are selected as likely targets for male aggression. Misogyny is often thinly disguised within the bounds of appropriate sex-typed behaviour. Women are loathed for their rampant sexuality, or lack of it, and for their dirty bodies. Feminine body functions are seldom discussed frankly, and are discreetly hidden as distasteful consequences of being female, or they are discussed with vulgarity and contempt.

'People attack not only those whom they have learned to dislike, but also those whom it is relatively safe to attack' – Bandura (1973). Woman's role is to be passive, submissive and content with her place in life. Of course, this passivity and acceptance is changing with the advent of new role definitions for women. But the change is extremely gradual, and is far from complete. Hence, women will continue to be considered 'safe' targets of aggression /violence.

The process of victimization is further hastened with the dehumanization of the victim. 'People selected as targets are often divested of human qualities by being viewed not as individuals with sensitivities, feelings, and hopes, but as stereotyped objects bearing demeaning labels such as "gook", or "niggers" . . . Foes become "degenerates", "pigs", and other bestial creatures . . . After victims have been so devalued, they can be cruelly attacked without much risk of self-punishment' – Bandura (1973). Surely words like 'cow', 'dog', 'broad' and 'chick' as applied to women fulfil the same function.

Women are portrayed in the media in stereotypic fashion. Intermingled with wife/mother are simpleton, whore, sex object and victim. Current

movies are peopled with abused, neglected and dehumanized women!

Socialization of males encourages greater competitiveness and aggression in boys. Male models in the media reflect an exaggerated emphasis on male aggression, and violent behaviour in the media is often rewarded. Even the absence of negative reinforcement has an effect in terms of reinforcement. Children watching media presentations which include rewards for violent actions are vicariously reinforced themselves. When women are victimized, and the aggressors are not punished, incidental learning of the same type occurs.

The impact of these factors on girls and boys, women and men, can only be detrimental. It serves to place a wedge between the sexes, and it may perpetuate the victimization of women in the media, and in reality. I sincerely hope The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry considers these points in studying the issue of violence in the media.

## Appendix A

### The Image of Women as Objects of Aggression

Every day women are presented as being appropriate objects of assault by the pictures on the covers of such magazines as *Master Detective* and *Confidential Detective*, among others. Any young boy or girl or adult sees these pictures any time they go up to a magazine rack. The pictures invariably show a woman in a state of partial undress or otherwise exposed who is bound, gagged and/or threatened with a gun, knife or in some way being subjected to violence or threat. The composition of the picture and often the titles printed on the covers deliver a clear message that associates sex with violence and presents women as the object of such aggressive behaviour.

We know that almost all of our attitudes about the appropriate treatment of other people and even of animals for that matter, come, not from specific teaching on the part of parents and teachers, but from the day-to-day examples which are presented. These examples are set by the entire culture in which we grow up. Not only our parents' and families' behaviour, but the pictures we see, the television we watch, the behaviour of strangers and playmates – all of these things become our models for what our culture believes is right and proper.

We have begun to realize that public media have this kind of influence and are properly concerned about extensive exposure, especially of children, to violence on television. We no longer believe it is appropriate to present black people or any minority group in such a way that states or implies they are appropriate objects for derision, exploitation or violence.

If the sort of magazine I have described consistently showed a Newfoundland fisherman, an Indian or a black person in such a manner, there would be an outraged protest. Members of these groups would quite properly see this sort of thing as being unacceptable. As a female and a psychologist, I say the current presentation of women as objects of aggression is just as inappropriate.

The fact that women are assaulted and raped in our culture is not a reason for such presentations. Newfoundland fishermen, Indians and black

people are also exploited and assaulted physically and psychologically. The fact that this is inappropriate is why we don't present such images in public media as models any more.

It is time to get such images of women at least out of the easy access of children. This could be quite simply accomplished by not putting these magazines out on view. Any adults who wish to buy them can perfectly easily ask for them.

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## Appendix B

### The Social Learning Theory of Aggression Applied to the Special Case of Rape

The present paper represents an attempt to apply the general principles of the social learning theory of aggression to the special case of rape. 'A high degree of specificity is required at the investigatory level because there is little reason to believe that the diverse activities subsumed under the omnibus label "aggression", though sharing some ingredients in common, have the same determinants' – Bandura (1973). It is, of necessity, a highly speculative paper, prepared in the hope that a new research perspective will be generated, and that specific areas of exploration will be identified.

Depending upon the theoretical framework within which aggression is researched, various definitions are offered. Lorenz (1963) defines aggression as the 'fighting instinct in beast and man'. This establishes his position as a nativist. He focuses on the drive aspect of aggression, speaking in terms of a build-up of hostility and the discharge of tension with aggressive acts. Feshbach (1964) differentiates between incidental (unintentional), instrumental ('directed toward the achievement of non-aggressive goals') and hostile aggression ('aggressive drive for which the goal response is injury to some object'). The emphasis is on drive. Bass, in Berkowitz (1969), defines aggression as the 'delivery of noxious stimuli to another', and distinguishes between active/passive and direct/indirect aggression. He attempts to de-emphasize the 'intention' component of aggression in a purely behaviouristic analysis. Bandura (1973), within the framework of a social learning model, defines aggression as 'injurious and destructive behaviour that is socially defined as aggressive on the basis of a variety of factors, some of which reside in the evaluator rather than in the performer'. There is a greater emphasis on the social context of aggressive acts. As implied by the definitions, each approach creates a specific focus resulting in separate and distinct methodologies, predictions and possible solutions for the control of aggression.

Nativists such as Freud and Lorenz view aggression as instinctive, only slightly amenable to modification. Modification of form and intensity of aggressive acts is the best solution. Lorenz (1963) suggests that a deeper insight into the causal variables governing our behaviour will enable us to modify our behaviour through target substitution and the rechanneling of militant enthusiasm. Also a possibility is selective breeding, with the goal of achieving a less aggressive species. He postulates the need for cathartic discharge of aggression, and warns against total suppression of aggression. This approach is often criticized for discouraging more fruitful perspectives – Bandura (1973) – and for providing justification of aggression in support of existing power structures – Reed (1971) – including the male-dominant power structure.

Various disciplines have lent support over time to the nativistic approach. Animal studies have been cited as providing evidence for the instinct model, but recently have lost credibility due to the great variability of behaviour within the animal kingdom (both inter- and intra-species), as well as the difficulties inherent in drawing hasty analogies between humans and animals. Archer, in Crook (1970), discusses the concept of territoriality from this perspective. Popular authors speak of the 'territorial imperative'. Research evidence, however, shows that the acquisition and defence of territory, within a single species and between species, is a highly complex and variable behaviour, dependent upon a large number of factors. In the area of neurophysiology, J. L. Brown, in Southwick (1970), emphasizes the instinctive 'capacity' to behave aggressively, and the ability to learn according to the 'law of effect'. Hormonal studies no longer support unquestioningly that man is a natural aggressor (and coincidentally, that woman is naturally non-aggressive). D. E. Davis, in Southwick (1970), states that the 'almost universal reaction of animals to androgens resulting in aggressive behaviour unfortunately has permitted the assumption that aggressive behaviour always depends on androgens'. He points to studies in which chicks with increasingly large doses of testosterone become overweight and inactive, with large combs and small testes. Again, the relationships are complex, and provide inadequate



quate support for the biological/instinctual model of aggression.

Schachter and Singer (1962) have demonstrated that arousal due to hormonal imbalance must be interpreted by the individuals in order to respond within the framework of a particular emotional state. These researchers injected epinephrine into subjects who were subsequently informed, misinformed, or told nothing at all of the expected effects of the drug. Both the misinformed and the 'ignorant' group displayed an emotional state which was contingent upon social situation. Subjects tended to label their physiological arousal as euphoric or angry dependent upon the experimentally controlled social situation. Cognitive mediation has an effect upon the interpretation of physiological states.

Feshbach, a drive theorist, focuses on the special case of arousal due to anger, as opposed to the general case of an ever-present aggressive instinct. Initially, 'frustration produces an instigation to hit rather than to hurt' – Feshbach (1974). Reduction of the drive to aggress may be achieved through injury to the frustrating source or injury to a substitute target; representation of mediating responses incompatible with hostility (such as Christian love); or 'modification of the eliciting stimulus condition, either through removal of the stimulus or through a change in the meaning of the stimulus'. He also notes (1961) the variable effects of vicarious aggressive activity, and modifies the prediction that vicarious aggression will always have cathartic effects in order to account for the stimulating effects it also produces. In this model, too, there is a build-up of energy which must somehow be dissipated.

Buss, in Singer (1971), identifies money, prestige and masculine role (status) as reinforcers of aggression. The control of aggression is acquired through the control of reinforcement contingencies.

Bandura maintains a position very much like that of Buss and other behaviourists, but includes cognition as an important variable. Also, the emphasis is upon the social nature of behaviour, and observational learning, a social phenomenon, holds an integral place in this paradigm. The implications for control of aggressive behaviour will be discussed later. According to Bandura

(1973), the three basic variables, under which all others may be subsumed, are: stimulus properties, reinforcement contingencies and cognition. Classification of specific variables within these categories results in a great deal of overlap, and often the labelling of a variable is quite arbitrary.

### Stimulus, Reinforcement and Cognitive Variables

Berkowitz (1967) demonstrates the facilitative effects of certain stimuli on aggressive responding. These effects are due primarily to the aggression-eliciting component of the stimulus, developed through association. The 'association of a stimulus with aggression evidently can enhance the aggressive cue value of this stimulus'. The aggression-eliciting stimuli in the 1967 study were hand guns and shot guns. The subjects tended to evidence stronger attacks upon the instigators of their frustration in the presence of assorted weaponry as opposed to the presence of badminton racquets. Although Berkowitz's perspective includes learned associations, the emphasis is still too heavily upon the stimulus itself. Applied to rape, this perpetuates the attitude that the woman who is raped has elicited the assault. In fact, there is little commonality among rape victims except with respect to their sex. The notion that all women, without regard to individual differences, elicit rape, is inadequately supported by survey evidence. Berkowitz (1967) also speaks of impulsive aggressive responses which are prompted by the stimulus once the subject is angered. This has little or no application to the case of rape where most rapists preselect their victim (*Ms. Magazine*, July, 1974).

The solution proposed by Berkowitz (1967) is 'removing external stimuli capable of evoking aggressive responses'. This is not feasible when it is women who are the external stimuli. It is interesting to note, however, that there are some proponents of this approach even in the case of rape. It was suggested to Golda Meir by her Cabinet that, since the incidence of rape had risen dramatically, a curfew should be placed upon women, keeping them out of sight, thus preventing their being targets for rapists. Golda Meir's response was to suggest that as it was the male population who provided the aggressors, a curfew

should be placed upon the men – a refocus regarding relevant variables (*Notes from the Third Year*, 1971).

Bandura (1973) discusses the paired associations which occur, but there is a greater emphasis on the learning component relative to stimulus properties. "... aggression elicitors are conditioned in the course of natural social interactions." Children learn from their parents and communities who to dislike and how to demonstrate their dislike.

Feminists have identified past and present forms of misogyny thinly disguised within the bounds of appropriate sex-typed behaviour. Of rape, Greer (1970) writes, "the act is one of murderous aggression, spawned in self-loathing and enacted upon the hated other." This loathing, particularly as it relates to the female body, is too often felt by women also. The goal of North American woman is to disguise as best she is able the natural appearance and smell of her own body. Hair removers, feminine hygiene sprays, padded bras and cosmetics are 'big business'. Natural body functions are seldom discussed frankly, and are discreetly hidden as distasteful consequences of being female – Toth, Delaney and Lupton (1974). Woman, the sex goddess, becomes further and further removed from her natural sex – Greer (1970).

The association between woman and sex object is well documented. "Every survey ever held has shown that the image of an attractive woman is the most effective advertising gimmick" – Greer (1970). The implication of many ads is that the woman is a product among products. The ad 'sells us our lives and our experiences as products and it uses a woman as a product to do it' (*Mind Warp*, 1973). The emphasis for women is upon looking lovely, for being ever youthful. Of course, this is at odds with the reality of life, and the degree of conflict it must produce in both men and women cannot be accurately assessed.

The image of woman includes submission to males. Regardless of personal misery and frustration, the purpose in life is to appear happy, and pleasing to men.

Why have they been telling us women lately that we have no sense of humour when we are always laughing? Turn on the tube: there we are, laughing away, running

in slow motion through warm sand with the Pacific roaring in back of us, goldenrods and grass undulating in synch with our mane of long straight hair, and the camera slightly out of focus and the lights diffused and blinking. All we do is laugh. We're sudsing our hair on the colour television and laughing, we're catching taxis in our new pantyhose and laughing, we're playing with pink telephones and laughing. Laugh! We're a laffriot. And when we're not laughing, we're smiling. We're smiling at the boss, smiling at the kid (no headache is going to stop me from smiling at my kid), smiling at the old man, smiling at the dog, at the baby, at the gas man, the cop who just gave us a ticket, the automobile mechanic who just insulted us, the men on the street who just whistled at us, the guy with his fly open who's following us down the street (maybe if we're nice he'll go away), smiling through parties, smiling through conversations, smiling when we talk, smiling when we listen, fixed, attentive smiles, bright teeth, mintfresh breath, packed up troubles and smiles, smiles, smiles. *All She Needs*, Ellen Levine

Women must demonstrate pleasure with the sex role they play, or suffer the label of 'unnatural'. The media bombards the public with images of women in ecstasies over new household/cleaning products. Again, a conflict between reality and fantasy occurs. In a study by J. Bernard (1972), it was shown that women tend to feel a growing dissatisfaction with their role in marriage (and interestingly, males evidenced a growing satisfaction with the relationship). Mothers are caught in the bind of being unable to pretend and being fearful of being viewed by their children and neighbours as unnatural.

The importance of the submissive, happy, non-aggressive female to the question of rape lies in the statement of Bandura (1973) which follows:

"People therefore attack not only those whom they have learned to dislike, but also those whom it is relatively safe to attack."

Perhaps the image of woman will change as more and more rapists are prevented from successfully aggressing upon women who are trained in self-defence, and as more incidents involving the death of a rapist, caused by his intended victim, are publicized. Recently, there have been two cases wherein a woman murdered her assailant. A California woman was sentenced for murdering, on the day after the rape, one of the two men who raped her. Her reported statement was one of regret, having failed to murder the other one. A Montreal woman is being

tried for the death of her assailant who, in this case, died during the attempted assault. As Singer (1971) has said, "efforts to deal with women's lack of overt aggression by attributing masochistic intropunitive tendencies based on psychosexual dynamics are no longer convincing".

Bandura (1973) postulates that humans acquire information regarding specific aggressive actions, general tactics for a variety of situations, and attitudes or values of a culture, through observational learning. The information acquired may or may not produce behavioural changes, but there is evidence to suggest it is learned regardless – Bandura, Ross and Ross (1963). Siegel (1958) found that children's attitudes to taxi drivers were affected through radio presentations depicting taxi drivers in a stereotyped fashion.

There is a great deal of research recently which attempts to delineate the attitudes and values presented in school texts regarding role expectations and sex stereotypes. In an article entitled, *See Dick Run, See Jane Sit* – Cheda (1971), these roles are explicit regarding sex appropriateness. In a study involving school children, Bandura, Ross and Ross (1963) discovered that "a number of these children were firmly convinced that only a male can possess resources, and, therefore, the female dispensing the rewards was only an intermediary for the male model". This is an example of previous learning contaminating the experimental situation, for the purpose of the study was to research imitation of behaviours exhibited by an adult in control of positive reinforcers. The children had already learned which sex controls the positive reinforcers.

Hicks (1965) found that the male peer model had the most immediate effect and the adult male model the longest lasting effect in an observational learning experiment. This relates to the advertising ploy of using male announcers to specify which brands to buy. Advertisers feel a male is more readily accepted as an authority.

Siegel (1958) suggests incidental learning through mass media portrayals, cultural myths and stereotypes plays a part in existing sex differences. In the mass media, males are dominant and aggressive, females submissive and passive. On this basis alone, it would be possible to predict a greater incidence of male aggression (as opposed

to the frequency of female aggression), and also a high rate of male aggression directed females. In fact, males engage in more frequent and more violent crimes, and rapes occur within the U.S. alone at an estimated rate of one rape every 14 minutes – Lear (1974).

Researchers have dealt extensively with the influence of television upon behaviour. Bandura (1973) states, the "evidence supports the conclusion that televised aggressive modelling, through its instruction and sanction of aggressive methods, lowers the threshold of aggressive response and shapes its form". The author of this paper suggests that the attempts on the part of women's liberation to alter the unrealistic images of woman in the media are no different from the efforts made by other ethnic and occupational groups which "condemn televised characterizations that repeatedly portray representatives of their group in an unfavourable light" – Bandura (1973). Feminists have enlarged the scope of their activity to include advertising and educational materials.

The role of reinforcement in establishing aggressiveness in humans has been well reviewed. In a study of aggressive familial patterns – Bandura and Walters (1959), it was shown that aggressive boys had parents who demanded, instigated and condoned assaultive behaviour. Often, parents undertake discrimination training by providing negative reinforcement for aggressive behaviour in the home while positively reinforcing aggressive behaviour outside the home. Largely, these parents are fearful their children will be "pushed around".

Children who are rewarded for hostile remarks later exhibit more physical aggression than those who are reinforced for positive or neutral verbalizations – Lovaas (1961). This is interesting in view of the boys-will-be-boys behaviour which involves the labelling of little girls as 'dumb' and 'silly' and feminine activities as 'sissy stuff'. This appears to be a fairly common assumption made by young school-age males, and is of apparently little concern to parents and educators. The long-term effects of this behaviour on male/female relationships could prove to be an interesting research area. Bandura (1973) postulates the identification



of enemies is a learning process, and this might indicate a learning trend.

Stereotyped behaviour patterns are directly reinforced. "The male role is active, assertive, dominant and competitive, with an accent on physical aggression"—Bandura (1973). Although not stated, the unpalatable alternative left open to girls includes labels of passive, unassuming, submissive and non-competitive, with an emphasis on physical inaction. These extremes are not often found unmodified in the human population, but there is a generally accepted norm regarding sex differences which tends to follow this pattern. In the study of Bandura, Grusec and Menlove (1966), girls were less likely to perform aggressive acts even under direct incentive conditions. This was explained by the fact that the "modelled responses involved masculine-typed activities".

Reinforcement may also be vicarious. "Witnessing aggression punished usually produces less imitative aggression than seeing it obtain social and material success or go unnoticed"—Bandura (1973). Allowing male aggression upon females to go unpunished in media portrayals must surely have adverse consequences. The goal of women's liberation is to ensure that it does not go unnoticed.

Bandura (1973) discusses the concept of internalized, or self, reinforcement. An aggressor may utilize techniques which neutralize self-condemnation normally experienced after committing acts of aggression. One such method is the displacement of responsibility. In the case of rape, this might be achieved by fixing the blame on the naturally aggressive, sex-oriented nature of man. Related to this, is the technique of attributing blame to the victim(s). This could take the form of "She deserved, elicited or provoked the attack". A third technique involves the dehumanization of the victim. "People selected as targets are often divested of human qualities by being viewed not as individuals with sensitivities, feelings and hopes, but as stereotyped objects bearing demeaning labels such as 'gook' or 'niggers' . . . Foes become 'degenerates', 'pigs' and other bestial creatures . . . After victims have been so devalued, they can be cruelly attacked without much risk of self-punishment"—Bandura (1973). Surely words

like 'cow', 'dog', 'broad' and 'chick' as applied to women fulfil the same function.

Hallie (1971) notes that the victims may come to believe the degrading characterizations they hear about themselves. This is supported in the reports of rape victims who feel shame and guilt, and by the relatively small number who report an assault because of these feelings. By virtue of their sex alone, many women feel they have invited rape. Women seldom believe they will be raped, for too often 'good' women assume only 'bad' women are raped. Using this logic, if they are raped, they are 'bad' women.

The use of punishment in the control of aggression produces results which are not always desirable. Withdrawal and counter-aggression, Bandura (1963) are possible outcomes. Young children who are punished by parents are being presented with aggressive models—Bandura and Walters (1959). The differential use of physical punishment as applied to males and females might produce further information.

"The likelihood that aggression will be punished, the nature, severity and duration of the aversive consequences, and the time elapsing between aggressive actions and negative outcomes also determine the suppressive power of punishment"—Bandura (1973). The likelihood that rape will be punished is minimal—Neuman (1974). Most rapes are not reported, and if they are, it is most likely that the defendants will be released, or, if convicted, will be convicted on charges other than rape. The time elapsing between the rape and the conviction may be delayed for long periods of time, further reducing the effectiveness of judicial punishment.

In a recent Kenora rape case, the alleged rape occurred in September, 1973. The first hearing (a mistrial) took place in April, 1974, and the final trial was held in June, 1974. The three men charged with rape received sentences of 19, 21 and 24 months on convictions of gross indecency and assault. The trial proceedings, however, leave no doubt that a rape had occurred. In fact, one of the three men testified to it.

Several variables which are cognitively mediated influence the performance of aggressive behaviours. Bandura, Ross and Ross (1963) looked at the importance of reality cues relative to



the modelling situation. Models were either live, filmed or cartoon characters, and children were most likely to imitate more realistic models, although imitative behaviour was demonstrated in the cartoon situation as well. Images of woman and woman's role are also graduated with respect to realism: the home environment provides male/female interactions to model, television and movies provide further models and the caricatures of *Playboy* and similar magazines provide yet another set of models. It would be interesting to research the degree of conflict aroused by such a preponderance of conflicting models. Bandura (1973) addresses the question of model distortion which can occur in situations where parents exhibit denial of reality. Perhaps for some children it is difficult to distinguish which is truly real – the parental model or the media presentation. These children may see the model distortion as occurring in the home rather than in the media. For children of single parent families, the *Dick and Jane* family of their school texts causes some confusion. The feminist press has attempted to counteract this phenomenon with stories about children from varied familial situations, such as divorced parents, adoptive and foster homes, and non-sexist role playing.

The aggressor's self-concept, and the degree to which self-esteem is threatened or maintained, is a cognitively mediated variable. Threats to self-esteem are viewed as primary antecedents to aggression. After an aggressive act, the aggressor "has demonstrated he is not helpless and impotent" – Feshbach (1964). A rapist uses a female victim to alleviate his sense of helplessness and impotence. McCary (1967), in reviewing the work of several researchers, describes a typical rapist: "... the rapist is about 26, is from a low-income, culturally deprived background, and is mentally retarded or of dull-normal intelligence ... is usually immature and is frequently physically unattractive". This lends support to the idea that a rapist has a poor self-concept, and is possibly more susceptible to threats to self-esteem. The fact that he is most likely of low intelligence may relate to the degree of difficulty encountered in establishing a realistic image of self and woman from the myriad of conflicting and superficial models presented in the media.

A variable which was once posited to be the necessary and only antecedent of aggression is frustration – Dollard et al (1939). It has been demonstrated, however, that frustration is only one of many antecedents of aggression, and that it is not a necessary one. It is often assumed that rape victims tease and frustrate their attackers into committing rape. However, as mentioned before, most rapists select their intended victim long before the actual attack. There is little evidence to support the idea that the victim actively instigates frustration, hence rape. The frustrating effects of the continued portrayal of unrealistic and unattainable sexual characteristics for male and female might better explain rape in terms of the frustration-aggression hypothesis.

### Therapeutic Implications

According to Bandura (1973), there are three ways in which the social learning theory is distinct in its therapeutic implications. It varies with regard to content, locus and the agents employed. "With regard to content, treatment procedures are mainly applied to the actual problem behaviours requiring modification." The locus for change is within "the natural settings in which aggressive problems arise". The most effective treatments are generally carried out under close professional supervision by persons who have intensive contact with the aggressor and can therefore serve as powerful change agents. This in itself does not differ significantly from behaviour modification programs for aggressive children carried out in the schools under the supervision of a clinician.

The therapeutic process involves three tasks: to delineate desired changes in performance terms; to identify the antecedent conditions that produce it and the consequences that maintain it; to objectively assess the results, making adjustments throughout the process in order to optimize the results. Scott, Burton and Yarrow (1967) have outlined a typical program designed to alter the aggressive behaviour of a four-year-old child, who prior to the experimental condition had been receiving adult attention for undesired behaviours. This study demonstrates the use of the subject as his own control. The design incorporated four 'periods', a baseline period in which the experi-

menter interacted with all the children in the class and obtained a baseline for the subject while the regular teachers maintained control; Period Two, in which the subject was rewarded by the experimenter for desired responses (socially desirable responses to peers); Period Three, during which time the experimenter returned to the baseline role, and the teachers providing the same reinforcement contingencies as in the baseline period; and, Period Four, in which the situation of Period Two was reinstated. A decrease in undesirable responses was evidenced in Periods Two and Four, a return to baseline occurring during Period Three.

Included in the behaviour modification program is a place for observational learning, wherein alternative modes of response are repeatedly modelled, with the subject encouraged to practise the modelled behaviour. Obviously, practice sessions must include 'success' experiences for the subject in order to produce long-lasting changes in behaviour. A rapist would be exposed to modelled relationships between men and women which were less superficial than stereotyped encounters. Both male and female models would evidence a greater depth than stereotyped sex roles permit. Male responses to women would exhibit a discrimination between the general category 'woman' and the special case 'this woman'. Models who fail to make this distinction abound in the media. Frank Sinatra made news headlines (*The Toronto Star*, 1973) with an attack on a woman journalist based on her sex rather than her occupation. He was angered by her stories of his friendship with Vice-President Agnew and her analysis of his political role, but rather than call her a liar or a yellow journalist, he called her a 'two-dollar broad'. More appropriate forms of attack would be relatively easy to portray.

Practice of learned skills would be arranged in situations which would likely be reinforcing. Role playing is one technique whereby the subject could practise dealing with frustrations experienced in inter-sex relationships. It would be necessary to model alternative values regarding 'success' in male/female relationships. The traditional view that a successful male is one who

'scores' with the 'broad' would most likely impede behavioural change.

Porro, as reviewed in Bandura (1973) has looked at the effects of self-evaluative models who responded with self-praise or self-criticism of an aggressive action. Bandura suggests that an aggressive model's self-evaluation reactions to personal conduct may have effects similar to those produced when reinforcement is applied to the model from an external source, particularly if the observer respects the model in question. Men like Rosie Grier, a football player who has been involved in efforts to erase sex-role stereotypes, who are undeniably all-male, might be effective in modelling situations.

Also incorporated within the therapy model is the opportunity for a subject to increase his repertoire of skills. Considering the possibility that a rapist is low in self-esteem, this would probably increase the likelihood for change. Role reversal is a technique which is used in social learning therapy, and it might help rapists to understand the depth and complexity of women, and inhibit their seeing women merely as objects with superficial needs and desires. In each case (improving skills and role reversal), an inherent scheme of positive reinforcement is required in order to produce behavioural change.

## Summary

As indicated in the beginning, this paper is, of necessity, speculative. There are few, if any, sources which deal with this specific area. A great deal of research is necessary before reliable predictions can be made regarding the degree of success possible. The antecedent conditions which make rape a likely response and the conditions which maintain it as a likely response must be empirically established. Specifically, it would be necessary to establish how rapists regard women and how this affects their interactions with women. As indicated, these factors are highly social in nature, and an approach of wider scope than the personal psychopathology approach is necessary in this regard.

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## **Gwen Smith Port Sydney**

My name is Gwen Smith and I am presently a student at Huntsville High School. Last week I witnessed your film called *Reflections on Violence*. I enjoyed it very much and, until I saw it, I never really gave much consideration to the matter. Your film has helped make up my mind and I feel that violence should be taken away from children's television shows, for it influences the way they play. Adult television shows should have violence minimized so that the show still remains interesting to the viewers. I think that Gordon Sinclair's attitude toward violence was very disturbing because human destruction in cold blood on television is disgusting to watch and just puts ideas into people's heads. Children are especially influenced by this kind of entertainment, and it should be taken away from most of our shows except for war shows which show how people suffered for us. Therefore, I say that violence should be abolished from television.

*Gwen Smith*

## **Ricky Sutton Huntsville**

My personal opinion about violence is that, if there wasn't any violence on television, I think more people would stop watching television because it would be boring. Violence is very entertaining. I think they should keep violence on television because then people can see what is really happening in the outside world. For instance hockey. Violence in hockey is the nature of hockey, because the only reason they fight is to make the game more interesting. So I think violence is great entertainment.

*Ricky Sutton*

## **L. M. Leith Windsor**

Speaking in behaviouristic terminology, it seems reasonable to assume that an internal vicarious reinforcement occurs as a result of viewing



aggressive sports models. If a player acts in an aggressive manner, gets away with it, and is then rewarded for his actions, the viewer has learned that aggression pays. If the observer then found himself in a similar situation, he would be predisposed to act aggressively because he has seen that the positive consequences of this behaviour outweigh the negative consequences. Stated simply, aggression as a solution has been learned!

In conclusion, one final fallacy deserves elucidation. Aggressive behaviour need not be immediately manifested after the viewing of violence to indicate that learning has occurred. The individual is capable of storing this learned behaviour for use at a later time. Obviously, this increases the time range available for utilizing aggressive behaviour learned by means of television violence. An added element of concern is concomitant upon the preceding information.

*L. M. Leith, Ph.D.*

## **John E. Callagan**

The frustration, conceived as an instigator to aggressive behaviour, and which is experienced daily by children reared under severely deprived conditions, must be exacerbated continually by the television media which exposes them to a standard of life contrasting markedly with their own.

*Professor John E. Callagan  
College of Social Science  
Dept. of Psychology  
University of Guelph*

## **Ridley College St. Catharines**

People, especially adolescents, are fascinated by violence. In *Song my, the Human Imperative*, Miriam Braverman, a librarian at the Brooklyn Public Library, cites examples such as *Oedipus Rex*, where teen-agers, in a discussion after having read the book, ignored the overall theme but were totally fascinated by the scene in which Oedipus tears out his eyes.

This fascination with violence has been noted

by many librarians. Interest in gangsters, war and Hitler is amazingly high and Lillian Morrisson of the New York Public Library says that the demand for these types of books is getting increasingly high at increasingly lower ages.

Commercial literature, which attempts to give the reader what he wants, seems to be following this trend of increasing interest in violence. The amount of violence in commercial literature definitely appears to be rising and much of this violence is portrayed unnecessarily or out of context.

This could be detrimental, but we feel that this trend is more directly related to our increasingly violent society. We also found that excessive violence, especially where the victim is vividly described, often turns the reader off violence.

*Members of English Class 3A  
M. R. Cooke, English Department*

## **Beaver Brae School Kenora**

We feel that the violence in the media is presented in a distorted manner. We understand that it would be impossible and unnecessary to eliminate all of the violence in the media, but we strongly feel that it should be reduced.

*Grade 11  
Personal Law Students*

## **Judith Johanson Sioux Lookout**

The segment (of a program called *Home-Made Television* and . . . supposedly for children) showed a child removing the liver of its dead grandparent in the graveyard. The child was subsequently haunted by the grandparent's ghost. This was shown at 4:30 p.m. – a time when children should be able to watch programs safely.

It may be argued that a child would understand that this was fiction. This cannot be assumed in the case of younger children, especially when real people act out the parts.

Even if the child is old enough to understand

the difference between reality and fantasy, these are not suitable subjects for their viewing.

As a direct result of this show, my children suffered from bad dreams, loss of sleep, and fears not present before that.

Afternoon shows for children in this area have frequently lacked any entertaining or educational qualities, but at least they could be viewed without direct harm. In conclusion, I would like to see more control exercised in children's programs.

*Judith Johanson*

### **CKSO-TV Sudbury**

The feeling seems to be that, with the rating code and proper disclaimers, the viewer has the opportunity to be his own judge. I feel television should respect opinions and warn people of possible offensive material.

The rating for programs can be announced early in television listings and on-air promotions, and parents or viewers in general can make whatever decision they feel is necessary.

The television stations do not decide what programs are going to air, the viewers do.

Every year television attempts programs that conform to the wishes of the anti-violent, anti-sex, anti-emotional groups, and in many, many cases, these shows bomb. If the people will not watch *Swiss Family Robinson* but will watch in great numbers *Baretta* they, the viewers, are making the decision on what programs will be aired.

Many television executives are getting tired of being blamed by the minority for programming to the majority. So often we hear "why would a television station do that?" I think we should start hearing "why would the viewing public do that?"

If the majority of people don't watch a program, it won't be run.

*George Lund  
Manager*

### **Radio Station CFOS Owen Sound**

We wonder whether or not Canadian society is

more violent now than it was 25 or 50 years ago. Is it possible that people believe that in a permissive society there is less possibility of violent actions being punished? Does this tempt people, especially young people, to use it, keeping in mind there has been a diminished respect for authority, including parental attitudes toward police, traffic and liquor laws and a diminished influence by the church and elected representatives?

If, as a result, a change in media content is important to the broad public interest, this change should not be imposed by means of government censorship of media content. It should be imposed by the communications industry alone or in concert with other free institutions in our society, by means of guidelines.

*Bill Hawkins  
Station Manager*

**Brian Garfield**  
**Alpine, New Jersey**  
**U.S.A.**

The film *Death Wish*, presumably based on my novel, offered vigilantism as a solution to the problem of urban crime.

Apparently and allegedly, the film inspired actual acts of violence that were committed by people who saw it – people who were inspired by, and emulated, the violence depicted in the movie.

I objected to the film. Perhaps, in part, my objection was the result of injured auctorial vanity: the film showed the vigilante character (Charles Bronson) as a hero to be emulated, while my novel – the presumed source of the film – showed him as a man tortured by his fantasies who finally found himself shooting unarmed children. The novel was intended as a warning; the film perverted that theme. Admittedly, the film was startlingly effective: it provoked passionate responses in audiences.

Concerned by the prospect of its being broadcast to millions of viewers on network television (in November, 1976), I asked the then-president of the CBS network, Arthur Taylor, to consider withholding the film from prime-time broadcast because of its possible effect on the behaviour of unstable viewers. It had already inspired several crimes, the result of its being shown in cinemas. In addressing Taylor I pointed out that I was not trying to impose censorship; I was appealing to his conscience.

The film was broadcast nevertheless. Apparently it inspired no acts of real violence, and I was relieved. Still, I would prefer that it had not been shown.

Alone, *Death Wish* is innocuous. But taken together with television's endless stream of violence, the film could only reinforce a growing conviction among audiences that violence is a suitable solution for everyday human problems.

Terrorists have come to believe that acts of violence are legitimate expressions of grievance. Probably they've learned this attitude from constant exposure to these ideas as they appear in the mass media. Social scientists tell us – and common sense confirms – that a steady diet of news and entertainments in which violence is

shown as beneficial and heroic is bad for us. Individual depictions of violence may be harmless but the never-ending barrage of them desensitizes, propagandizes and brainwashes us, as by a ceaseless torture.

As a writer I am concerned less with sociology than with drama; violence in drama is bad for us for artistic reasons – it becomes a crutch, a cliché, a lazy substitute for genuine conflict and auctorial ingenuity.

We cannot squeamishly avoid reality; violence in life cannot altogether be ignored; little can be said about tyranny, crime, war and other aspects of the human condition without reference to violence. Yet it need not be the principal or sole subject of drama. Suspense – the key of drama – more often requires the threat of violence than its execution; many stories and themes do not require resort to the expedient clichés of mayhem and murder, and in those cases, if the clichés are employed, they are gratuitous and distasteful and undoubtedly harmful. Conversely, it can be fascinating for a writer to create suspense and dramatic conflict without resort to the stereotypes of brutality. One's ingenuity can be provoked by the challenge of seeking alternatives to violence. Some of my novels and films are abundantly violent but others contain no overt violence at all, and these latter have succeeded both critically and commercially. (So much for the argument that one must provide violence in order to sell.)

Still, my quest for non-violent alternatives is voluntary, inspired by conscience rather than statute, and I would resist and loathe being forced to do what I willingly do on my own initiative. No society is free if its artists are censored; censorship is tyranny. The line between artistic freedom and social responsibility may be impossible to draw. While I deplore the ceaseless violence that the media inflict on us, I will not concede the right of any group to force censorship upon us in a misguided attempt to cure that evil. The only solution, I believe, is persuasion. I have been persuaded, and others can be persuaded in the same way. The media – publishers, networks, producers, writers – must be informed and educated; consciences must be pricked. Our job – mine, at least – is not to close doors. (Would we rule out the swordplay in *Hamlet* on sociological

grounds?) It is to open new doors, by offering attractive alternatives.

The problem exists: the bathwater is filthy. But let's not throw out the baby with it. Censorship would be a far worse evil than the evil of violence in media. Violence cripples individuals; censorship cripples civilization.

*Brian Garfield*

## **The Central Canada Broadcasters Association Toronto**

### **I. Introduction**

The Central Canada Broadcasters Association draws its membership from privately-owned, English-language television and radio broadcasting stations in Ontario and Quebec. Members include 15 television stations and 59 AM/FM joint licensee stations. In Ontario, the CCBA represents about 88 per cent of privately-owned commercial television stations and about 72 per cent of privately-owned commercial radio stations (AM/FM).

The CCBA is a voluntary Association which annually elects a Board of Directors. This Board takes its decisions on policy issues in light of the consensus it believes exists among its members. The Board does not govern its members nor can it bind its members to any decision unless it is, or is made under, a by-law of the Association. Members, of course, can agree individually to observe certain practices such as program codes like the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' Broadcast Code for Advertising to Children. Decisions like this, are, in the last analysis, that of the individual members.

That there is range of views on any subject within the Association is fairly well-known and members often speak individually on topics of special interest to them. The Royal Commission has, in fact, received several briefs from Ontario broadcasters, a fact which illustrates the individuality of the membership.

The CCBA's relationship to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) is that of a regional body. Member stations of the CCBA are all members of the CAB; in fact, CAB membership is a condition of membership in the CCBA.

As the Commission was informed, the CAB has provided to the CCBA staff support to prepare this brief.

### *The Situation of the Broadcaster*

While members of the Commission are fully aware of the Broadcasting Act, especially the Chairman



because she piloted the Act through Parliament in 1968, it bears repeating that broadcasting in Canada is treated by Parliament in a very special way. No other industry is so closely governed by Parliament and no other members of an industry have an equivalent requirement for their industry as do broadcasters – that is, to operate the Canadian Broadcasting system in a manner ‘so as to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social, and economic fabric of Canada’.

To ensure that this policy was implemented, Parliament created a regulatory body with wide powers, which is now known as the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). The vigour, dynamics and dedication of the Commission’s first two chairmen are well known and need no amplification here. The point to be made is that broadcasting in Canada is an extraordinarily challenging and complex environment in which to work. A broadcaster who depends on advertising revenue must meet the requirements of the CRTC, the advertiser, and most importantly, the perceptible demands of the public.

In this regard, an essential ingredient in a broadcaster’s success or failure is the rapport he establishes with the ‘community’, be it local, regional or national, as in the case of a large network. The broadcaster must perceive and endeavour to satisfy the programming interests of both the various majorities and minorities within the community. This calls for an astute appreciation of community values and standards. Broadcasters must be responsible and egalitarian and they are not in a position to decide unilaterally what is good for, or bad for, their audiences. Rather they try to present programming which is entertaining, innovative, and stimulating to their audiences. But they must bear in mind the standards of the community. Like any good democratic institution, it is an unwise broadcaster who finds him or herself too far in front of the audiences.

## **II. Response to Questions by the Chairman of the Royal Commission**

In a letter to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, Miss LaMarsh asked a series of questions,

some of which appear to contain implicit assumptions that are not applicable to the Canadian television industry. In responding to these questions we have grouped them under appropriate subject headings or titles.

### *A. Programming Policies.*

#### *Questions by Royal Commission.*

Reliance on foreign entertainment programming; economics (costs and revenues) of buying foreign programs; program selection and buying policies; how specific violent and non-violent programs come to be chosen.

Domestic program production policies; economics of domestic and non-violent programming; programming strategies in relation to violent/non-violent and domestic/imported mix.

Pro-social programming policies, strategies, budgets, emphasis; specific policies, if any, for children, time frames when children are watching, providing ‘baby-sitting’ material, et cetera; policies re pro-social programming directed to adults.

Research on audiences, reactions, tastes, or on potential effects in determining content; perceptions of the educational and other impact of the network and medium.

#### **CCBA COMMENT**

There is no strategy with regard to violent and non-violent programming. Broadcasters put together a schedule of balanced programming to include comedy, drama, news, public affairs, music, et cetera. The mixture of domestic and imported programs is regulated by the CRTC for both radio and television. The latter, which probably is of most interest to the Royal Commission, requires that the broadcast day overall be 60 per cent Canadian content and 50 per cent in ‘prime time’ (6:00 p.m.-12:00 p.m.), according to prescribed definition. However, it is no secret that in general, Canadian production is financed, indeed subsidized, by revenues derived from the broadcast of purchased foreign programming.

Question seven mentions “time frames . . . providing ‘baby-sitting’ material”. Television stations do not broadcast programs to children as an electronic substitute for parents or others

responsible for the care of children. It is parents who utilize the television as a 'baby-sitter', a use for which television was not, and is not, intended.

Just the same, children form an important part of the audience and children watch a great deal of television. Because attractive programming for children is difficult to conceive, research, finance and produce successfully, it is a special challenge for broadcasters, both in their capacities as producers and as parents.

For these reasons, private broadcasters, together with other interested parties and organizations, founded the Children's Broadcast Institute. The CAB, our national body, was one of the original members and, with many of its individual members, continues to fund and support the CBI. So far, the CBI has sponsored two seminars, one of which was a workshop to bring together Canadian producers, writers, actors, advertisers, researchers, child specialists and anyone else who was interested. This workshop proved especially valuable to producers from smaller stations who had an opportunity to have access to resources which are not typically available to them.

Successful Canadian children's programming is also rendered more difficult to sustain in light of the kind of competition coming from U.S. channels. While the quality of many Canadian shows is good, any of us who have contact with young children know how attracted they are to the Saturday morning fare available off-air or by cable from the U.S.

One might say that young children reflect their parents' preference for the very slick professional programming from the U.S. And some if it is very good, such as *Sesame Street*, *Electric Company*, *Mister Roger's Neighborhood*, and so on.

The financing of children's programming is very difficult for privately-owned stations. While some advertising time is permitted during such shows, the time allowed must be less than that for older viewers' programs. Also, the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' Code for Broadcast Advertising to Children regulates strictly the style and content of each ad. The number of advertisers for children's programs is limited and therefore Canadian-produced shows for children will, by and large, not be self-financing. Nevertheless

innovative programming is made, CTV's *Kidstuff* being an excellent and current example.

The views expressed in the brief given to you by the CBI, especially paragraphs 16-21 – on the parental role and the sharing of the television experience – are ones which this Association accepts and recommends because of the thoughtful, responsible and perceptive views contained therein.

General programming policies covering production, selection, and scheduling follow rational procedures based on experience and reason. In the early spring of each year Canadian television programmers evaluate the performance of the past-season program schedule and determine programs which they would like to renew for the upcoming season. This evaluation takes into account statistical surveys like BBM and A. C. Nielsen, as well as reactions gathered by the stations from viewers and critics.

In the specific case of programming from United States producers, the decision by the U.S. networks is the determining factor as to which of the American programs will go back into production.

As soon as American and foreign producers have their pilot programming ready – usually at the end of March in the American case – program teams representing Canadian networks and their affiliates, and teams representing independent buying groups begin to screen the variety of pilots available. All teams pay greatest attention to those program pilots which appear to have the best chance of being selected by one of the three U.S. networks in the upcoming season.

Generally, it is U.S. programs which have the most appeal for Canadian viewers. Since such programs are readily available to most Canadians via American stations, either off-air or by cable, each Canadian station, to compete for a share of the audience, has to broadcast the most popular American properties that it can afford.

The reasons are simple: Canadian audiences have demonstrated over the years that these program forms are most appealing to the largest number of viewers available in the time blocks in question. Canadian stations generate their maximum revenues from the high audience-prod-

ucing, non-Canadian programming and most of these are American produced.

It is vital that stations procure the highest audiences in these available time periods. The revenues generated from these periods enable the stations to provide numerous other services they program which generally do not pay for themselves or in some cases, at best, break even (such as news and information programs; community service programs; children's programs; non-prime time program service).

As mentioned above, the likes and dislikes of the audience are carefully observed and measured by independent statistical survey organizations as well as by station and program managers in their contacts with the public. These, nevertheless, are not the only determining factors.

All broadcast licensees in Canada are obligated under the Broadcasting Act to provide "varied and comprehensive programming of a high standard using predominately Canadian creative and other resources". Promises of performance are filed in writing with the CRTC when licences are first considered and when they are up for renewal.

Hence, each station and network devises its policies, selects and schedules its programs and allocates its resources in light of the Broadcasting Act and CRTC Regulations, and in light of the demonstrated or well-perceived demands of Canadian audiences.

The basic 'rule of thumb' for fictional program placement is to offer lighter entertainment in the early evening to be followed by more dramatic forms. This 'rule of thumb' is a generalization and there are exceptions. For example, in certain communities there may be marked placement preferences because of considerations not related directly to television, or to offer more choices so that not every channel has basically the same kind of program at the same time of day, and so on. Sometimes these factors result in program schedules which, by accommodating one part of the audience, result in annoying others. In short, compromises are present in broadcasting as they are in all other endeavours.

## *B. Advertising.*

### *Questions by Royal Commission.*

Advertising and time sales influences on programming; advertising content policies.

### CCBA COMMENT

Advertisers purchase time slots. The price for such spots depends on the audience which may reasonably be expected to be viewing at a given time. This 'reasonable expectation' is based on statistical reports and other industry indicators.

Some advertisers tend to purchase time slots in certain kinds of programs because of the audience profiles. By the same token, stations will place restrictions on particular kinds of advertisements. An example is where most broadcasters will not schedule ads before 9:00 p.m. for women's personal care products.

Advertising content policies are adopted by individual station or network policies which in turn are governed or affected by the following:

CRTC Regulations which inter alia specify maximum commercial minutes and also incorporate the requirements of the Federal Department of Health and Welfare and requirements of the provinces in certain cases.

the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' Code for Advertising to Children. This Code is controlled and revised annually. The Code has been endorsed in principle by the CBC and the CRTC has asked stations in their licence applications whether they will adhere to the Code.

the guidelines of the Telecaster Committee which includes CTV, TVO, Global, and several major private stations across Canada.

the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards. This is administered under the aegis of the Canadian Advertising Advisory Board.

the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' Code of Ethics.

Some believe, *incorrectly*, that advertisers effectively program stations. There was a time in the earlier days of television when advertisers controlled the rights to many programs. That is no longer the case.

Occasionally, an advertiser will be particularly interested in the development and sponsorship of a program or program series. An example would be *The Human Journey* series sponsored by

London Life. While there would obviously be agreement on the basic concepts of such a venture, editorial control would rest with the producer, in this case the CTV network. This kind of cooperation between broadcaster and advertiser is, in our view, demonstrative of their respective roles and responsibilities.

#### *C. News Policies.*

##### *Questions by Royal Commission.*

Reliance on and policies towards imported versus own news gathering services; reflection of U.S. news styles, priorities, content in Canadian newscasts and documentaries, especially with respect to violence-related news.

Policies, practices, conventions and philosophy regarding reportage of and emphasis on violent news; influence on newscast formats; policies with respect to specific incidents such as assassination attempts, school shootings, Toronto subway stabbing, rape incidents, trials involving violent crimes, et cetera.

#### CCBA COMMENT

There are three basic classifications of news: international, national, and local. All stations look after local news according to their individual policies. Depending on network affiliations, stations purchase various services from a variety of sources. National news naturally comes from Canadian services and international news from both Canadian and foreign sources. Because of reporting, transportation and transmission costs incurred over the wide geography of Canada, news is very expensive. Nevertheless, it can be said that most Canadians, and in particular residents of Ontario, enjoy excellent news services with a marked and growing choice of broadcast outlets. Moreover, the style is our own and in answer to one of the above questions, is distinctly different from others.

It should also be remembered that news directors are, in a sense, autonomous in their day to day operations. The news directors are experts in their field and are expected to do a good and responsible job in an ethical and fair-minded manner.

News policies are complex matters. Often the

searching enquiries and cold light of publicity irritate people involved in news events. The problem of ensuring the free flow of information to the public and at the same time protecting the personal rights and dignity of involved people will probably never be solved with complete satisfaction. In certain incidents, too little or too much may be reported but often only hindsight tells us that.

In response to a request from the CCBA, the Radio Television News Directors Association of Canada provided a statement on news ethics and comments on the above questions asked by Miss LaMarsh . . . and the CCBA believes it makes good sense.

News items involving violence almost inevitably contain an intrinsic element of shock. To report the incident accurately and completely and to neither reduce nor exaggerate the gravity of an incident, is no mean challenge. Because the incident is violent is no reason to reduce (or increase) the seriousness or horror of a given reality. It is a disservice to the public to change a reality to a kind of fictional drama or even documentary drama. The news should be reported accurately, completely and without bias.

You have also received briefs from individual broadcasters which have dealt with this topic.

We will have more to say on this topic later.

#### *D. Public Accountability.*

##### *Questions by Royal Commission.*

Assessment of the implications of the various kinds of media violence, and of research on and concern about media violence.

Response to complaints from members of the public, advertisers, critics, politicians, regulators regarding violent or other media content; level and effectiveness of complaints.

Self-censorship or internal codes on good taste, respect for privacy, sex, violence, et cetera; application to entertainment programming and to news and sports.

Accountability practices within the organizations re aspects identified above.

#### CCBA COMMENT

The phrase 'media violence' misrepresents the



nature of violence and the role of media. Violence is seen or heard or read depending on the kind of media, but it is real violence as in the news, or pretend violence as in fictional programs?

Violence was not invented or discovered by the media; the role of the media (if you also include books, theatre and cinema in the definition) is found in the reportage or depiction of violence. In the latter case songs, poems, stories, and plays have been carrying out this function for thousands of years. Movies and broadcasting are relatively new.

An assessment of the research on and concern about violence portrayed or reported through the media and its implications leads to a state of ambiguity. While there are a number of researchers in various disciplines who feel depicted and news-reported violence are harmful in one way or another to members of society, there are others who dispute these findings and even propose differing theories. The Commissioners indicate in their Interim Report that they have made up their minds on the evidence, even prior to the public hearings. In our view the issues are unresolved.

In an unofficial background paper produced by the CRTC Research Branch for its 1975 Symposium on Televised Violence entitled *Some Themes in Research on the Effects of Television Violence* there is a description of this lack of unanimity in research findings.

In the past 25 years, literally thousands of research studies on the effects of television and film have been published. The broad thrust of the findings of these studies has been to establish a connection between viewing violence and various forms of anti-social behaviour. However, an extensive review of the literature reveals a number of objections, broadly methodological in nature, that have been raised to studies and their findings:

- (1) The studies derive from a faulty scientific world-view, that human behaviour can be studied with the methodologies of the physical sciences.
- (2) Those studies conducted under laboratory conditions are not applicable to real life situations.
- (3) Field studies, conducted outside the laboratory, cannot take into account the full impact of the many other factors.
- (4) The cause and effect relationships are not always clear and unambiguous.

(5) The methodological diversity of specific studies diminishes their comparability.

(6) Most studies deal only with short-term effects; there is a lack of a body of long-term research.

For another summary and references to the scientific literature on the subject, one can refer to three Rand Corporation Studies prepared by George Comstock and several associates and published in June, 1975.\*

Closer to home, there is the recently released report *The Impact of Violence on Children: A Review of Literature* that was commissioned by the North York Board of Education. This report made the following statement with regard to the various studies it cited:

Although the laboratory studies cited in this section have greatly furthered our understanding of the relationship between television violence and aggressive behaviour, there are those who have some concern as to whether the relationships demonstrated under controlled conditions in the laboratory setting can be generalized to natural settings. Perhaps the most conservative interpretation of these findings is that we know what type of relationships *can* exist between television violence and aggression, but we cannot be completely sure of the extent to which such relationships do exist 'in the complex world of free-ranging behaviour'.

In short, one can see from all of the above, that the research community concerned with this topic differ widely among themselves.

Thus public accountability in broadcasting calls for a sensitivity to the consensus of the community and also a respect for minority rights and concerns. In that context, what is the level and effectiveness of complaints about violence in the media, and presumably, in television specifically, by members of the general public, advertisers, critics, politicians, and regulators?

Jacques Hébert, a part-time member of the CRTC, has indicated his acute concern in public hearings. A number of recent licence renewal announcements by the CRTC have asked stations to take into account the 'deep and legitimate

\* 1. *Television and Human Behaviour: The Key Studies*, R-1747-CF.

2. *Television and Human Behaviour: A Guide to the Pertinent Scientific Literature*, R-1746-CF.

3. *Television and Human Behaviour: The Research Horizon, Future and Present*; R-1748-CF.

concern of many responsible citizens' in this regard\*.

Complaints by politicians have been few, although well publicized. Critics are divided but then critics, being individuals, usually are. Advertisers, by and large, have kept their views to themselves because they recognize they should not try to control programming; the potential for a conflict of interest or other disservice to the public about violence is, relative to the population, small indeed as received by the CRTC and stations, and particularly so in relation to other subject areas.

A CRTC Research Branch study project reviewed 3,070 BBM diaries collected from six Canadian cities during the 1974 fall survey: Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, Saint John, and Halifax. Slightly over half of the respondents (53.9 per cent) took advantage of the section(s) which allowed spontaneous comments and these numbered 5,098.

Of the 5,098 comments, only 196 or 3.8 per cent even mentioned violence, although almost all of these were negative.

Comments relating to commercials were about ten times as numerous. Moreover, about 25 per cent of the 'violence' comments complained not about violence per se, but about the kind or quality of a show. Thus it is difficult to find solid evidence that a majority of the population or even a reasonably substantial portion of the public is concerned about violence reported or depicted on television.

The lack of concern by the public on the one hand and the expressed concern by some prominent members of society, including ministers and regulators on the other, places the broadcaster in a difficult position.

Broadcasters have long been aware of the need for codes of ethics (like the CAB Code of Ethics) that could help to interpret in a fairly practical form the standards of the community. While many say that the broadcaster can influence, to a great degree, the standards of a community, many forget that those same community standards determine what a broadcaster will or will not do. In short, the communication, the inter-action

between community and broadcasters, is a two-way process.

In an earlier section there is a list enumerating the various codes, many of which concern advertising. That is not surprising because most public complaints about television concern commercials. Thus a great deal of effort has been devoted to improving the quality of commercial announcements and part of that effort has been the development of a number of codes governing broadcast advertising.

Programming is another matter. It is difficult to devise guidelines and regulations which do not constitute censorship and which do not hamper creativity. The CRTC has general regulations which apply to broadcast programming and paid advertising, including commercial, partisan and political ads. The accountability aspects of CRTC regulations are essentially negative and well-known in the final step: suspension or revocation of a licence.

There is also the CAB Code of Ethics recently updated and directed to a number of general subject areas. This Code is essentially a guide for stations to help them to devise operating policies in light of their individual communities' needs. It is not a coercive document. If a CAB station member should appear to violate the Code, the member would not be disbarred from membership. Rather, the Association seeks to be a positive and conciliatory force in matters of programming policy. If a station departs from the Code we suggest it would also depart, in most cases, from the ethical standards of the associated community, i.e., the audience, and the station will be made to feel the community's disapproval.

In addition, even if no CRTC regulation has been breached, an unhappy relationship between a licensee and a community is not a welcome situation because the private broadcaster seeks and relies on the goodwill of the community. In short, for both positive and negative reasons, the station knows and believes in the value of full integration with the community, as a leader perhaps, but no less accountable to the community at large.

\* CRTC Decision 76-88, February 17, 1976.

### III. Critique of Interim Report of the Ontario Royal Commission

In our view, the Interim Report of the LaMarsh Commission was essentially negative, not very constructive, and sometimes fallacious. While it is not pleasant to be critical, we do want to establish certain major points for the record.

The first point is a criticism of the Ontario Government and is not the responsibility of the Royal Commission. In addition to the seriously questionable decision in constitutional terms of setting up a Commission that would enquire into broadcasting, the Terms of Reference specifically include an unproven assumption, namely, that there is 'increasing exploitation of violence' in the communications industry. This phrase tends to suggest deliberate planning in the communications industry as a whole to make use of violence in an improper way and that such use is increasing. Had the Commissioners been asked to enquire if 'exploitation' was indeed the case, then the terms of reference might have approached fairness and objectivity.

While such terms of reference gave the hearings a bad start, the Royal Commission proceeded to compound matters with a regrettable lack of objectivity in their Interim Report. Therein, the Commissioners stated that they had reached two basic conclusions prior to any public hearing: "first, that there is an extremely high level of violence in the media; and second, that this violence may cause damage in a society in many ways". Given that the Commission has made up its mind, broadcasters and, others no doubt, feel there is no point in trying to persuade the Commissioners to another viewpoint. Rather this brief is to put on the public record the position of the broadcasters.

On page I-4, the Interim Report states "... the consensus of research is that a steady diet of news and entertainment violence may produce desensitization even in the fairly well-balanced individual to a point where hurtful or violent acts against others become unconsciously accepted as normal behaviour. . . ." As outlined earlier in the brief, such a consensus cannot be deemed to exist.

Quoting stories as a general characteristic or condition is unprofessional in any serious report

and in a government document is particularly reprehensible. This seems to be the case on page I-4 where it is stated that there were reports of schoolyard brutality and hockey violence, both of which were attributed to having been learned from watching televised wrestling and televised hockey. As to the schoolyard incident, those of us who were in schoolyards, *prior to television*, can recall far worse things happening than one girl kneeling another in the face. As to televised sports violence and hockey violence in particular, the problem clearly lies in the regulation of the sport, not the television camera and receiver. If children imitated improper actions of adults, whether viewed in the arena, or on television, it is the improper action that should concern us.

In this regard, one theory holds that throughout childhood, children, as part of the learning process, will initially model their behaviour on real-life adults, principally parents. As they grow older, the range of models begins to include teachers, peers, and other adults. The desire to imitate fictional characters is known and easily observed in children. However, the disapproval or approval of behaviour by parents, teachers and peers seems to be the most important influence. But the Interim Report seems to suggest that televised violence, depicted or actual, has assumed a predominant influence. So who does most influence the mental maturation of the child, television or parents? We do not think that television has replaced parents.

The report continued on page I-5 that "most of these objections were to television programming . . . This wave of criticism for television should be worth more consideration than the usual glib self-serving remarks from television and radio commentators; a point which we hope more senior broadcast industry owners and managers will take into account." Such remarks would not seem to inspire public confidence in any comments from senior managers and owners. There would seem to be little point in calling for careful consideration by an industry of an issue when some of its best known personalities are dismissed as 'glib'.

Again, on page I-5, there is the implicit suggestion that one man's frustration in reaching a senior executive with what appears to be a valid



complaint (about the scheduling of promotional film clips) is taken as typical of the industry. People can contact managers as the public relations files of stations and networks will indicate.

We know of no station which, *as policy*, permits mature audience movie promotional clips to be viewed during children's programming or at other obviously unsuitable times. Such things have occurred through human error or occasional lapses of judgment and they are regrettable. However, people operate television stations and 'bloopers' do occur. Nevertheless, when such things happen, members of the public should call or write their station manager and they should not be afraid to be a little persistent, if necessary, to receive a reasonable reply.

While the Commissioners in their signed report felt that television-depicted or actual violence caused violence, there was no consideration of how violence, reported or depicted on television, might be compared to other causes of violence. Surely the Commissioners would have to recognize poverty, hunger, greed, the pursuit of power, drugs, alcohol, family break down or moral decay, et cetera, as the underlying causes for violence, all of which antedate but continue past the relatively very recent advent of television. Not to have put the issue of reported or depicted violence into perspective was a serious omission.

On pages I-3 and I-4, there is a list of disasters and deaths that followed a televised replica, such as the television director's play, aired in Britain, which apparently inspired five such suicides in the London subway. The director in question was Ted Kotcheff, who was described in the Interim Report as saying he will not forget the lesson. According to the CRTC Symposium on Violence, August, 1975, he did not say that. What he said was "It was the first time I really began to concern myself with the relationship between myself and my audience. Did television offer models to translate appetites and impulses into action?" He did not make any cause-effect linkage but rather recognized the powers of stimulation of drama, television or theatre, or cinema. For a potential suicide, a catalyst perhaps, but in a city of 8,000,000 plus, one could reasonably expect on a given day more than five potential suicides.

Kotcheff also went on to say that he deplored censorship and censors. Moreover, he added that he felt film and television had played a large part in humanizing our society, far outweighing any damage attributed to them by detractors.

We hope that the Final Report of the Commission will reveal a restored objectivity with a strict regard for fact, and that it will review all the issues with a balanced and reasonable perspective.

#### **IV. Approach of Broadcasters Considerations**

There has been a great deal of publicity over the violence on television question. This issue, regardless of the zeal and attachment of either side of the controversy, is not clear-cut.

While some researchers affirm that violence on television may be harmful in one way or another to society, there are others who dispute their findings.

The broadcasters, in their role as CRTC licensees, members of the community, owner/managers of a station or network, employers, and newsmen, have to take into account many factors before adopting policy. In this case several factors stand out:

- child viewers and parental responsibility
- audience preferences
- complaints and compliments
- the position of the broadcaster and requirements of the law, and community expectations
- research findings
- censorship, by the licensee or government

#### *Child Viewers and Parental Responsibility.*

The responsibility all broadcasters recognize is that television can influence to some degree the thinking and perceptions of young children. Whether that influence has any lasting reality over time depends on the particular children, the influence of their associates, and most importantly, their parents or guardians. These are factors which will have different strengths in each child. What is clear is that the immature mind requires special treatment. Thus, broadcasters in Canada and elsewhere have been trying to



develop and purchase better programming for children.

At the same time broadcasters, as members of their community, try to assist parents in their responsibilities which arise in rearing children. Broadcasters recognize that they cannot and should not attempt to replace or supersede parental responsibility. Therefore, many broadcasters, in recognizing that many television programs are not suitable for younger viewers, have adopted policies to help parents in their responsibilities by scheduling adult programs when children are not expected to be in the audience, by broadcasting warnings as well, prior to the beginning of a program, and sometimes deleting certain scenes. This last practice, however, raises as many objections as it allays others and therefore becomes less and less acceptable. In addition, some parents permit their children to view at all hours of the day. The principal point, however, is that broadcasters can neither broadcast programs all of which are acceptable for children nor assume parental responsibility for someone else's children.

The first question of people who object to that view is to express concern about the child who receives inadequate guidance and supervision. This is a regrettable situation but one about which broadcasters can do very little if the parents are not fulfilling their responsibilities. There was an outcry some years ago to complain that the average program was geared to the mental level and understanding of the average 14-year-old. That would be an unacceptable situation in the minds of many, and it would, we believe, be equally unacceptable that all programming should be acceptable for all children under 13. So broadcasters must conclude they can only help parents to do their job.

### **Audience Preferences.**

Herein probably lies the key to the whole question – what, in a democracy, do the viewers wish to see. How do broadcasters determine the answer? In this regard, both publicly-supported and privately-owned stations must react much in the same way. If a program receives an inadequate response, which depends on certain well-known

minimum standards or requirements, then it becomes necessary to replace it with a more popular program. Conversely, popular programs will be maintained as long as they are available and popular. The audience makes it clear through empirical and other methods what it wants to see. In the last analysis, it is the individual viewer who will decide to watch a given program.

In this connection it is worth noting that Ontario residents' top 20 shows, according to the BBM Spring 1976 survey, are as follows:

#### *Top 20 Shows Seen by Ontario Viewers on Canadian Stations*

1. *HAPPY DAYS*  
1,707,300
2. *WALT DISNEY*  
1,546,500
3. *ALL IN THE FAMILY*  
1,515,700
4. *THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN*  
1,473,300
5. *THE SOUND OF MUSIC*  
(movie) – 1,449,300
6. *WINTARIO*  
1,145,500
7. *GOOD TIMES*  
1,143,700
8. *SONNY AND CHER*  
1,066,900
9. *RHODA*  
1,055,700
10. *THE CAROL BURNETT SHOW*  
990,600
11. *CHICO AND THE MAN*  
987,500
12. *MISS TEEN CANADA PAGEANT*  
978,600
13. *THE BIONIC WOMAN*  
962,900
14. *M\*A\*S\*H*  
960,200
15. *EMERGENCY*  
890,200

16. *THE MARY TYLER MOORE SHOW*  
882,700
17. *HOCKEY NIGHT IN CANADA*  
(CBC-Saturday Night)  
864,300
18. *WAYNE AND SCHUSTER*  
863,700
19. *FRONT PAGE CHALLENGE*  
834,900
20. *LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE*  
828,200
1. *LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY*  
894,000
2. *THE WIZARD OF OZ*  
(movie) – 700,600
3. *M\*A\*S\*H*  
684,100
4. *THE SOUND OF MUSIC*  
(movie) – 683,600
5. *THE BOB HOPE SHOW*  
646,700
6. *WELCOME BACK, KOTTER*  
642,400
7. *RICH MAN/POOR MAN*  
610,800
8. *THE ABC MONDAY NIGHT MOVIE*  
598,200
9. *HAPPY DAYS*  
571,800
10. *MITZI GAYNOR*  
568,300
11. *THE GRAMMY AWARDS*  
549,100
12. *THE RICH LITTLE SHOW*  
495,800
13. *THE BIONIC WOMAN*  
487,600
14. *THE CAROL BURNETT SHOW*  
485,600
15. *BALLOON SAFARI*  
460,700

By way of comparison, the following are the top 20 programs watched by Ontario residents on American channels:

16. *HAWAII FIVE-O*  
446,900
17. *PHYLLIS*  
425,800
18. *ALL IN THE FAMILY*  
410,500
19. *THE SUNDAY NIGHT MYSTERY MOVIE*  
409,900
20. *THE JEFFERSONS*  
402,500

Programs in which violence may be depicted neither head nor dominate this list and, in fact, seem to be a very small fraction. (As far as hockey violence is concerned, that problem is of concern to the NHL and law enforcement authorities.) It would appear that a balanced choice is demonstrated by audiences and that a balanced program schedule is available.

With respect to the concept of balanced programming, or in effect, variety and choice, a study was done of a week's programming in three communities: Kitchener, Ottawa-Hull and Sudbury. The results demonstrate that there is, at practically every hour, a variety of programs from which to choose.

#### *Complaints and Compliments.*

In the Interim Report of the Royal Commission there is (on page I-5) the implicit suggestion that viewers cannot communicate with their local licensee or, if preferred, with the CRTC. This is not so. People do call and complain, and they do write to the CRTC. Station management personnel do respond, because they recognize that viewer complaints or compliments are a factor in determining the popularity of programming, and of the station itself. Moreover, as a member of the community, stations wish to do their utmost to be well thought of by their neighbours. Any other policy makes no sense.

#### *The Position of the Broadcaster.*

Broadcasters are accountable to the public through the CRTC and every few years must appear before the CRTC to renew their licences. At that time in particular, the station's record is on public view and members of the public are free to inter-

vene. Broadcasters therefore must be in a position to justify their stewardship, not to one segment of opinion or to another, but to the community at large. Hence, broadcasters must adopt a balanced and thoughtful policy or be open to criticism from all sides.

### *Research Findings.*

The violence on television controversy is far from being settled. The Federal Minister of Communications, Madame Sauvé, who expressed grave concern with regard to 'violent' programming, admitted there was not evidence to indicate "a clear causal link between violence on television and violence in society". It is clear that considerably more and better research will have to be done over many years to demonstrate one way or another the effects of depicted violence on society, on children, and on adults before final conclusions can be made.

### *Censorship.*

What does concern broadcasters and others is: what if some or all of the worst fears of the researchers turn out to have some real practical validity? What if fairly constant exposure to depicted violence is, in short, seriously detrimental to society as a whole? These are questions that broadcasters and citizens have to consider with care.

In asking these last questions, broadcasters believe that there should be no confusion between depicted or fictional violence and the broadcasting of real violence, be it nature, war, riot, crime, a highway accident, or a hockey game. We believe that the latter essentially is news and that neither the broadcaster nor government has any business in censoring news because it is shockingly or even horribly unpleasant. It is the duty of newsmen to ensure that violence is not reported or shown out of proportion to the actual circumstances in which it arose.

This concept was stated succinctly by Britain's ITV network in a submission to the Annan Committee:

In short, the first priority of a television news program is to present the viewer with a plain unvarnished account of happenings, as free as humanly possible of bias, and

making the maximum use of television's unique capacity to show these happenings, undeterred by the difficulty, no new one, of editing pictures.\*

That is difficult to do and no doubt newspeople (print and broadcast) will err occasionally on one side or the other, simply because they are human. Having stated that general condition, the news is what happens and in a democracy the people's right to uncensored information must be honoured in full.

We think this position on news is entirely justifiable and we draw your attention to what Dr. Northrop Frye, a part-time member of the CRTC, said last August to close the CRTC Symposium on Violence:

This attitude of detached concern is what is meant in literature by catharsis. Catharsis does not mean working off aggressive feelings by watching violent television programs: it means that when we see violence, violent emotions are aroused in us, and that a fully mature response passes through and beyond these violent emotions, reaching a point at which we accept the reality of what is presented to us, but accept it with neither approval nor panic. This is the attitude, surely, that the active viewer should take to all the violence reflected on his television set.

At this point, perhaps, we may see what a profoundly civilizing force television could be, and potentially is. All new inventions are apt to come first as social headaches, and it takes a while before their real usefulness is understood. In my younger days, in the Thirties of this century, I was often shocked and disgusted at the callousness with which intellectuals would rationalize or dismiss so many of the most horrifying events of our times, such as the great Stalin massacres and deportations, whenever such events did not happen to fit their political categories. Their infantilism was connected with their being entirely men of print: they never saw anything except lines of type on a page. But something of the real horror and evil of the Vietnam war did get on television, and the effect on public opinion was, on the whole good, in the sense that the American public came to hate the war, instead of becoming complacent about or inured to it. In a world like ours, horrifying things will happen practically every day from now into the foreseeable future. Newsmen in all media have a duty to report violence when it occurs; novelists and dramatists have a duty to present imaginative forms of it. For an audience of concerned, serious, active viewers, this is a part of reality, and we can fight violence in the street with better courage and hope if the violence on the screen is on our side.

What about fictional violence on television, or in

\*As reprinted in *Intermedia*, Vol. 3, No. 3, December, 1975.

the movies, or in plays, as we see it today? Some dramatists and writers do a good job and their work is publicly applauded. Others are open to criticism, not so much on the grounds that their use of violence is harmful to society, but rather that some violent scenes may be a substitute for good writing and drama. What should the broadcasters do? Should they become the sole arbiters rather than promoters of good taste?

In our view, the answer is clear-cut. Broadcasters cannot and should not become arbitrary censors of what is good and bad. The best they can do is to select the best programs available, in light of the finite available resources, that will attract an adequate audience. In this regard, parents and educators might wonder if there is adequate time spent on the teaching of how to appreciate televised and cinematic art forms. Time is devoted to this subject in relation to the appreciation of literature. Perhaps our educational system needs to do more with regard to the proper appreciation and criticism of television, movies, and live theatre.

It is, in the last analysis, the audience who determines what will be seen on television, or at the movies, or in theatres and concert halls. If a group of society is convinced that some kind of art form or any kind of practice is not good, in fact is bad for society, then it is up to that segment of society to persuade the others. In simple terms, for example, if one objects to hockey violence on television, removing hockey games from television is surely not the way to deal with violence in hockey. It is obviously necessary to go to source and take whatever action is lawful and appropriate.

However, if the public is against the minority view, no matter how convincing the argument, there is no point in attempting to impose 'prohibition'. That word now stands for the attempt, for relatively better cause vis-a-vis 'violence in the media', to ban the consumption of beverage alcohol. The potential and actual evil effects of the excessive use of alcohol are, unlike 'television violence', very easily demonstrated. Nevertheless, the public has decided that each individual must be given the opportunity to decide personally on whether to drink or not. There are laws and social stigmas which oppose excess but,

short of grave excess in public, it is an individual act, subject to provincial liquor regulations.

So, too, with television programming. If one segment of society is truly convinced that depicted television violence is essentially wrong, then the proper recourse for that group is to try to convince the public to turn off individually the programs in question. It would be essentially wrong and useless to attempt censorship by broadcasters or by government. Programs and movies, which might be forbidden or cut, would immediately arouse extraordinary curiosity and demand. Moreover, most of them would be available to Canadians from U.S. stations.

However, if through persuasion and education, the public voluntarily began to cease to watch any program, that would be another matter. In short, there are few things that disappear faster from the airwaves than unpopular, i.e., unwatched programs.

We would leave the public and the Royal Commission with one other thought: If television ceased to broadcast all programs tomorrow which contained any violence whatsoever, would there be a marked diminution of violence in Ontario? Canada? or elsewhere? We think not.

*The Central Canada Broadcasters Association*



## **Diane Howie Willowdale**

While this Royal Commission is concerned with violence in all areas of the communications industry, this submission is concerned with violence only as shown on television. As a spin-off both from the EDUCOM survey of North York parents, and from the EDUCOM March meeting with Mr. Scott Young as guest, I have studied some of the issues involved and have prepared this brief.

Is the enjoyment or dislike of violence on television simply a matter of personal preference? Is there really any harm in such shows? Are those who enjoy such shows entitled to the opportunity of watching them at any time? A serious study of the effects of television violence indicates that far more than personal preference is involved. Television violence has a demonstrably negative effect on the well-being and behaviour of individuals, and hence, ultimately on the well-being of society as a whole as well.

This brief deals with three areas of concern: television violence and modelling, television violence and values education, and television violence and freedom of speech.

### **Television Violence and Modelling**

Members of the Commission are undoubtedly well aware from previous submissions, of the nature and principles of modelling. For an outline of much of the research on modelling, including some Canadian studies, and for a summary of research findings, I recommend Urie Bronfenbrenner's *Two Worlds of Childhood: U.S. and USSR*, especially pp. 106 - 119 and pp. 128 - 139. Dr. Bronfenbrenner, an American behavioural scientist, discusses the modelling impact of television in education in the context of what he describes as the isolation of children by society into segregated age-peer groups, emphasizing the great amounts of time they spend watching television.

Modelling is the very basic learning process of learning by imitation except that more than simple imitation is involved. It is not necessarily the specific behaviour pattern which is imitated. The observer seems to capture the emotional state of

the model and whether or not the particular action gratifies that emotional state.

Television is a very potent source of modelling because of the amount of time spent viewing it. EDUCOM's parental survey shows that North York parents report that their children watch television for up to 22.9 hours per week for the nine-12-year-old age group, and the Board of Education's survey of the children themselves indicates they watch even more.

According to research and the principles of modelling, violence on television presents highly effective models for inducing aggressive to violent behaviour.

1. The mere viewing of a film showing violent behaviour increases the tendency of the viewer to engage in aggressive behaviour.
2. Exposure to film violence turns out to be more powerful than insult in instigating aggressive behaviour.
3. The sight of the suffering victim, far from reducing the aggressive reactions of the viewer, actually increased them.
4. Violent television shows present models of the immediate gratification of such negative emotions as anger, hostility, frustration and self-righteousness without follow-through on ultimate consequences in most instances.
5. Where the viewed model is punished for aggressive or violent behaviour, such behaviour is inhibited in the viewer. Where the viewed model is rewarded, the behaviour is induced. In many television shows the aggressor is either not ultimately punished for the violent behaviour or else the punishment is not comparatively severe, e.g. temporary suspension from the police force would not have much emotional impact for a child.

6. The lead characters in violent television shows all have the attractive and modelling potent qualities of competence, status and control over resources, most dramatically perhaps, the *Six Million Dollar Man*, and hockey stars.

7. The proliferation of violence on television, especially in prime time, follows the modelling principle that several models exhibiting similar behaviour are more powerful inducers of change than a single model.

8. Modelling is a two-stage process, the actual

acquisition of the emotive-behavioural pattern, and the later performance of it.

9. Since the potency of the model varies with the degree of identification with the model, and since most violent television shows have adults in the lead roles, modelling would be more effective for adults. All of us, at times, have negative emotions; we are angry, hostile, or frustrated. Anyone then could identify with violent television models of what to do with these negative emotions. What then is the effect of violent behaviour models on those who feel angry and hostile most or all of the time?

Bronfenbrenner concludes, and I quote, 'Given the salience of violence in commercial television, including cartoons intended especially for children, there is every reason to believe that this mass medium is playing a significant role in generating and maintaining a high level of violence in American society, including the nation's children and youth.'

Another major principle of modelling concerns the potency of models most closely involved with nurturing, reward and punishment. For most young children, this means parents. In an article in *The Globe and Mail*, December 25, 1975, Dr. Elizabeth Willett points out that it is the parents who present the most effective models of aggression and violence, depending on whether they cope with negative emotions successfully or unsuccessfully, or whether they merely repress them for later outbursts. Precisely the point. Do children who have undesirable parent models really need more violent models on television? Should parents who do present desirable models have to compensate for violent models on television? The EDUCOM parental survey shows, among other things, that many parents are concerned with providing good models for their children. They want help and reinforcement, not undermining of positive models.

Could it possibly be the case that children, or anyone else, in their television selections are (at least subconsciously) seeking models for ways to cope with problems? Preferably positive ways? No answers. Is it in any way relevant that the runaway favourite program for children aged nine and up is *Happy Days* of which the hero has become Fonzie? The Fonz is widely admired by

these children because he is cool. 'Cool' seems to mean that he can cope successfully with any situation without getting excited. Another point about the Fonz comes from observing his body language for being cool. Have you ever reflected on that position of closed fist and upraised thumb? Is it, or is it not a position identical with the beginning of a rude gesture indicating a violent act? The subliminal message here is, cope successfully and positively, but have violence ready. And that's cool.

Finally for this section, does television violence have any benefits for individuals or society? From psychoanalytic theory, the viewing of violent films, sports, or comic books has been considered a harmless way of vicariously 'getting it out of the system' and reducing aggressiveness. If so, angered viewers should 'feel better' after viewing violence. Research shows that this is not the case. Previously angered viewers show greater aggressive responses after watching violence, than do non-angered viewers. Television violence has no saving grace.

### Television Violence and Values Education

The members of the Commission are probably aware that the Ministry of Education for Ontario has recently updated the curriculum in 'Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions'. The new curriculum reintroduces values education, motivated by concern over the decline in human values in society as a whole. What does television violence contribute to values education? First, however, let's look at the foundations of the values education system advocated by the Ministry.

1. It is not indoctrination, the 'bag of virtues' approach of yesteryear.

2. It is based in part on the cognitive-development theory of moral reasoning devised by Lawrence Kohlberg. By cognitive-development, Kohlberg means that moral reasoning develops in stages, and that these stages develop in an invariable sequence – the same kind of approach as in learning to stand before learning to walk before running. He perceives six distinct stages.

3. A stage in cognitive-development of moral reasoning seems to be determined both by the mental abilities required to connect kinds of

factors, and by the child's understanding of what factors and values are involved.

**4.** In the new system of values education, children learn to choose their behaviour in a moral dilemma situation, either hypothetical or real, by critically examining what they are capable of understanding as issues in the dilemma, what they value, and then applying moral reasoning at their own stage of development. By means of questions from the teacher, children are encouraged to include issues and reasoning from the next stage up.

Kohlberg's six stages fall into three kinds of moral reasoning. The first two stages are at the pre-conventional or pre-moral level, the next two at the level of conventional or socially-decreed morality, and the last two are at the principal level. How does television violence relate to each of these stages? The stages below are Kohlberg's; their application as related to violence is mine, being outside his area of discussion.

**Stage 1.** Action is motivated by fear of punishment, short-range versus long-range. In violent television shows, the 'bad guy' is to be punished by the 'good guy'. The problem in moral reasoning comes not from this format of the old-fashioned westerns; it comes from situations in which the 'good guy', i.e., the character with whom most viewers identify, uses violent and brutal means to punish the 'bad guy'. Punishment of violent behaviour on the part of the 'good guy' is rarely part of the story, therefore no pre-moral reasoning from fear of punishment, only modelling of the violent behaviour without any inhibitions.

**Stage 2.** Action is motivated by desire for reward of benefit, both immediate and long-range. In violent television shows, this stage is the big one. The violence presents immediate gratification, immediate violent solutions to immediate problems, without regard for ultimate aims or other values being considered. Because of modelling, violence becomes the behaviour of choice, that is if conscious choice has a chance. There is rarely any element of moral dilemma about the violent behaviour.

**Stage 3.** Good behaviour is perceived as that which helps others or is approved by them. In violent television shows, the 'good guy' uses

violence to help others, a client or society, therefore violent methods must be okay, especially in the absence of considering any other methods.

**Stage 4.** Law and order orientation. Right behaviour consists of doing one's duty, showing respect for authority, both social and religious, and maintaining the given social order for its own sake. In television violence, the focus is on one issue only, the immediate problem primarily, without considering other relevant social and moral values or consequences. (As an aside, it is those in this stage 4 of moral reasoning who tend to object most strongly to violence in society as most contrary to law and order. Yet some in this stage find themselves in the paradoxical position of advocating violence to eradicate violence. If so, they lack something from the next stage up, the principle behind the law.)

**Stages 5 and 6.** The principled levels. Action is taken on the basis of some internalized principle of universal applicability above conventional morality. It is by means of such principles that conventional morality changes, that the laws of society change.

The use of violence reaches the principled level and herein lies the seductiveness of a rationale. One area is the use of violence as an active principle of revolutionary ethics, compared with the non-violent methods of evolutionary social change. More commonly, violence, especially killing, is perceived as the last resort principle of self-defence whether in a national defensive war or in the case of great personal danger. In cases of self-defence, violence is used to disarm the aggressor and remove the threat of danger, not for punishment or revenge, and is used only as a last resort. Its use entails the moral dilemma of 'you or me'. Pacifists would not agree with this self-defence principle. In violent television shows, in which the subject matter is revolution, war, or personal danger, the moral dilemma is rarely shown, the violent actions are presented as granted or necessary. As such, many television shows of violence are an abuse of any principled interpretation. If the moral dilemma were to be shown, its resolution would tend to fill the whole time of the program.

In violent television shows where the self-defence principle of violence is assumed (abused), a



strange phenomenon may occur in conjunction with modelling. The amount of great personal danger from some aggressor is a gross exaggeration of normal condition for most viewers. The great personal danger element, because of modelling, becomes applicable to any threat of any severity, and violence becomes the method of choice in any conflict or problem, however small. In short, the 'eye for an eye' form of retributive justice becomes 'two eyes, an arm and a leg for an eye'. This seems to be a regression to something prior to even stage 1.

In terms of moral education, the dominance of violence in prime viewing time at best reinforces the viewers into stage 2 of pre-moral reasoning – do it for immediate resolution of the problem. Coupled with modelling, this becomes, don't reason, do it. Television violence therefore opposes the normal development of moral reasoning. The parental survey indicates that the amount of time given to television by the nine-12-year-olds is nearly half as much again as for those younger or older. It is at this transition age when most children normally move from the pre-moral stages to the conventional stages. Because of modelling, and because of the dominance of stage 2 reasoning in violent television shows, the more that violent television shows are available and viewed, the greater should be the inhibition in the development of moral reasoning.

In summary here, television violence contravenes values education. The violent actions are rarely presented in the context of a moral dilemma, there is little, if any, critical analysis of the pros and cons of the violent actions in terms of ultimate versus immediate goals, and there is little, if any, consideration given to other personal or social values. If muggings, brutality, murder and even property damage (especially of the wanton variety) are not moral concerns, then what are?

### **Television Violence and Freedom of Speech**

When those who are concerned about the negative effects of violence on television recommend at least the restriction of viewing times for such shows or more drastically, the elimination of violence on television, up go the cries of infringement of freedom of speech and the

problem of censorship. It has not yet been established that some form of censorship is the only method effective in dealing with the problems created by television violence. There is self-regulation by the media, based on criteria which could be provided by the principles of modelling and moral reasoning in moral dilemmas.

Arguments upholding the freedom of speech in the media in general, can be either totally sincere, or can fall into two other categories. In the first category are the arguments where freedom of speech is used as an umbrella to cover underlying issues with a less secure base. The second category includes arguments which, when applied to freedom to show violence, become self-contradictory. Some examples:

1. One underlying issue is freedom of retailing and consumerism. There is a market for violence which allegedly sells the product of the sponsor. Already, in many ways, manufacturers are not allowed to sell faulty products and consumers are protected from unknowingly buying harmful products. That television violence is a harmful, faulty product has already been demonstrated above. It may well be argued that any individual is entitled to consume that which promotes his 'going to hell' in his own way, but not at the expense of taking other individuals and society with him.

2. Another underlying issue is artistic licence, the employment of violence or whatever for dramatic effect. Freedom of speech does not include licence to speak whatever, wherever and whenever one pleases. They are the examples of crying 'fire', slander, perjury, and false advertising for starters. Wasn't the debate between licence and responsibility in freedom of speech resolved long since in favour of responsibility? An example of where television is showing such responsibility is the CBS rescheduling and diminishing of violent television programs.

3. Any serious argument on behalf of unconditional freedom of speech assumes that freedom of speech is of greater value than freedom of personal safety. Both are highly important values. Their relative value is therefore arguable, but hardly assumable.

4. Any serious argument on behalf of freedom of speech becomes logically self-contradictory,



when applied to the right to show violence on television. By promoting violence, the freedom to show violence advocates that those who oppose violence should take violent action against it rather than engage in a peaceful form of debate on the issue as the means of change.

5. Freedom of speech applies where individuals have both the ability to speak, and something to say. The unrestricted showing of violence promotes violence itself which results in depriving some individuals of their ability to speak because of their death or injury, or in depriving them of having something to say through trauma or through fear of more violence. Freedom to show violence is therefore empirically self-defeating.

In conclusion, television violence has been shown to have no ultimate benefits either to individuals or society; rather it is demonstrably harmful to both individuals and society. This has been established unequivocally in the sections on modelling and on values education. Further, any objections to restrictions on violence on television are not effectively arguable from the position of freedom of speech since such arguments cover the real objection, or, the argument, when applied to violence, becomes self-contradictory.

*Diane Howie*

### **The Hastings- Prince Edward County Roman Catholic Separate School Board Belleville**

... Our committee found a lot of discontent among teachers, and parents, and indeed children themselves, about what they are seeing. There is entirely too much violence on television and this violence is not good for our kids.

One of the most valuable tools at the disposal of the classroom teacher is a good educational film. Our school systems spend millions of dollars each year on educational audio-visual material. These materials bring to life the spoken word and the printed page in a way never before possible, and we are greeted by our students with enthusiasm and interest. Yet, outside of school, public television and media in general heedlessly and blindly bombard our children with material that, if used in a classroom, would cause a parental uproar.

Television presents a wholly unreal picture of violence. Murders occur without blood and without pain. Actors murdered one week appear the next on another program. Criminals are glorified, their victims ignored. News programs exploit the sensationalism of crime and disaster, ignoring the human tragedy implicit in such occurrences. Evening after evening our children are exposed to what is the basest, most sordid and repulsive side of the human being. Its sheer mass alone must have an effect. Our committee discovered, time and again, in responses from students, alarming and distorted attitudes fostered, if not caused by the media:

I think the murders on television affect me because people just get up and go so people think they can go and shoot or stab or do anything to a person and they won't get hurt. Age 9

Violence on television does affect me because they are just showing us what is really happening in the world so that we will know how to protect ourselves against criminals. Age 11

We have failed these two children and countless thousands like them because they no longer feel safe in the communities across our province. Our children somehow have the idea that the towns in

Ontario are full of criminals and they need to protect themselves. Our committee rejects this. The vast number of towns in Ontario are still peaceful, good places in which to grow up, but they will not remain so if these attitudes developing in our young are not changed.

*P. Fleming*  
*Chairman*

## **The Official Board of United Churches Bluevale**

In a society where people are increasingly unable to manage even many details of their own life, let alone the larger events such as war, pollution and inflation, more and more people fall victim to the mad desire to do something – anything – to make someone aware of the fact that they are alive. Assassins, hijackers and snipers are the obvious examples our society sets. To go down in history as a killer is considered preferable, by some, to just disappearing without any recognition of having lived at all. It is the communications industry which creates this possibility for, without it, even a violent event would not bring the desired effect. Any unbalanced person with a gun can hold the world in suspense these days. What heady power!

So our children learn that the end justifies the means, if a cause (such as the IRA) is involved and, if not, at least it is one sure way of getting attention. Our children are increasingly taking for granted that human beings are expendable. For example, on the show *Police Story* on television there have been several incidents where informers were used and then callously deserted when their usefulness was at an end. In the Canadian production *Sidestreet* – also aimed at telling it like it is about the police, a man was left on the sidewalk wretchedly aware that the criminals he had helped to trap would make short work of his life as the officers drove away. The promise to protect him was laughed at. We have here a total disregard for humanity in the guise of fighting evil. The good guys can do anything to get rid of bad guys in this accepted pattern. We maintain that this is dangerous to a frightening degree. It means that our children are taking for granted that the goals of society are more important than the human life which that society is organized to protect. Hitler's Germany seems to be a forgotten lesson. It is not just the personal values of individuals which are involved but the determination of the way in which our whole society will move. We feel strongly that instead of undermining the sense of respect for human life, the communications industry should be concerned about enhancing it.

We know that, in a garden, weeds and flowers grow together and the same is true of constructive and destructive people. If we lavish attention on the weeds and ignore the flowers we will not have much of a flower garden. The media, it seems to us, is busy lavishing attention on all the evil aspects of human possibilities and failing to give even equal nourishment to the good.

*Rev. Wilena Brown*

### **Algonquin Regional Library System Parry Sound**

After some thirty years, experience in the library profession, I, personally, have never received any complaint from any reader over the use of violence in any book . . .

*K.H. Smith  
Director*

### **The Corporation of the Town of Geraldton**

CBLT, Toronto, is the one channel available to all, whether one subscribes to cable or not, and is, according to our classification, the least 'violent' of the three, but does it have viewer appeal? Fifty per cent of CBLT programming is news, either as it happens or an in-depth analysis of it. Most of the news programming is Toronto-oriented or so far removed from what is happening in Northwestern Ontario that interest is soon lost. Of the remaining 50 per cent of the programs, either their appeal is limited to a small segment of viewers or they are hardly able to compete with glossy, slick crime programming which consists mostly of USA productions.

*Ms Nancy Redgrift*

### **The Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association, Toronto**

#### **Controlled Television for Youth in Ontario**

There was prolonged applause in the United Nations Assembly on October 19, 1965, when Pope Paul VI climaxed his historic allocution there with the impassioned plea: 'No more war. No more war.'

The earliest pages of the Judaeo-Christian tradition are marked with the violence of fratricide by Cain, a symbol of the fever that has festered in the veins of the human race through thousands of years. This century, in particular, seems destined to set a new high in the long, tragic history, with two great wars, gas-oven genocide, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, refinement of torture and propaganda, terrorism and the drift towards socio-economic confrontation.

And yet the yearning for the orderly tranquillity of peaceful existence continues to inspire mankind and to spur the search for understanding and harmony or at least reduction of violence, between nations and within nations, between men and within men.

Although war, the supreme form of violence, especially nuclear war, is the prime concern of peacemakers, the octopus of violence has its tentacles into so many areas of life that a quick, overwhelming rescue appears visionary. Wisdom recognizes the need for step-by-step progress. At the Second Vatican Council, for example, even after Pope Paul's plea mentioned above, it was still held that self-defence could justify violence and that conscientious objection would remain a minority option. It was seen that the ideal of global peace must be built up painstakingly from smaller communities and would be reached only through the multiplication of small victories.

This sad realism has shaped the terms of reference of your Commission. Your scope is limited to violence in the media and has been further understood by many as concerned primarily with the impact of televised violence on youth. We agree with this practical approach and we believe that, to use a Gospel phrase, in the promotion of peace, the left hand should be busy

with global objectives but the right hand should be solving local problems.

### **Our Motivation**

Our Association, representing 60 separate school boards in Ontario, is naturally concerned in the first place with the impact of communications violence on the 400,000 pupils who attend our schools. Such an impact could militate directly against the convictions and attitudes which we seek to foster through religious, moral, and social experiences in the schools, and, in that sense, is very much our business, as trustees.

Moreover, because we work in a supportive role to parents, we cannot help but share their preoccupation with the pro-violence environment projected into their homes through some of the media, especially television.

As citizens, we are also aware that as far as the electronic media are at issue, the airwaves are in the public domain, subject to government regulation in response ultimately to the will of the electorate.

Finally, we are conscious of our possible contribution to the subversive effects of the media on youth, when, as consumers, we support advertisers who sponsor, perhaps deliberately, programs which set the stage for violence.

### **A Threefold Focus**

For these reasons we welcome the establishment of your Commission. At the same time, we are contenting ourselves with a specific focus: the impact of televised violence on the youth of Ontario.

#### **I. Provincial Level**

We have chosen the provincial field of responsibility because, from the point of view of program production, the possibility of worthwhile control on the national or international level is remote. Standards agreed upon as suitable for North American purposes and applied by the United States and Canada would take so much time and end up so ambiguous that nothing would be achieved. At the same time we believe that in Canada itself, a similar fluidity would be counter-productive, it would reflect regions and peoples

whose history and attitude would preclude useful agreement. In any event, each province would have to start at its own level.

The great advantage of concentrating on the provincial level however, is that, from the point of view of consumption, some concrete measures can be taken to guide and perhaps even coerce the reluctant electronic magicians to respect community standards. Action at this level would also reflect an effective degree of consensus within a well-defined area in Canada, thus making it possible for transmitters to compete on an equal footing. Finally, on this basis, which is admittedly from the outside, the legal entanglements of federal-provincial jurisdiction would be avoided.

#### **2. Youth**

Our second limitation of the topic, to youth, does not imply that adults need no assistance in resisting excessive emphasis on violence for their own good, but we are sure that blanket censorship of any kind, regardless of age, is so contentious an issue that a solution would be unreachable or, at least, so long delayed, that the more urgent situation of youth would be worsened. Besides, any attempt at control would have to distinguish clearly between the best interests of youth and of adults; why delay what has to be done for the former?

It is obviously impossible to protect the non-adult from unpredictable, explosive disruptions of ordinary life; nature herself provides such experiences in the form of gales, thunder and lightning, the sudden or accidental death of loved ones, illness. And where nature is controlled, evil men or awkward ones can be counted on to disturb the peace. Stress from such events is inevitable and, to a degree, useful in training for self-preservation.

But electronically contrived or re-created violence may offer an excessive concentration of such pressures which cannot help but affect youthful nerves, imagination, concepts of reality, emotions unrelated to action, and in the long run, engender either extreme tension or callousness, if not imitation. At a time when adults themselves are often confused through ignorance or excessive exposure to events, there must be some screening safeguard for youth, just as a new plant is not only



provided with soil, light, moisture, but also safeguarded against frost, weeds, insects and other enemies.

It is good to remember throughout the work of this Commission that one of the most powerful drives is involved – that of parental concern for their children. It should not be diverted to other purposes.

### 3. Television

Our third limitation centres on television because access to other media can be reasonably controlled by parents and peers, but the magic screen exercises 'compelling power' (Vatican II) within the home itself. Perhaps some future invention or some reaction of human nature will relegate the attraction of television in the home to manageable proportions, but, in the meantime, the intimate sense of participation engendered by this medium creates a world of vicarious experience to which youth is especially responsive. In fact, television does not extend or magnify the reach of human antennae, it rather brings sights and sounds into the domestic circle with such immediacy that its entire content exercises a certain degree of out-of-context violence.

#### The Grounds for Concern

In focusing on the impact of televised violence on youth in Ontario, we wish to make ours the analysis of the Hastings-Prince Edward County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. The harmful effect most deplored, they stated to you, is the *desensitizing* of children with respect to the true nature of violence. 'Sensitivity' is the golden key word. It is the quality which enables a child, and future adult, to make his own the pain suffered by others, and inclines him to avoid causing hurt to others. Since some violence is inevitable in every normal life, there must be a protective mechanism that keeps reactions within manageable limits. One cannot go through life fearful of stepping on an ant. But where the flood of violent experiences is too great or out of the ordinary, the person's level of moral and aesthetic sensitivity must soon be covered over with the scar tissue of callousness.

It is the characteristic of television to be able to

inflict such abnormal stress on youth within the relative security of the home. Parents rightly feel that this is a violation of hospitality, to say the least. In this connection we refer you to the brief of the Timmins RCSS Board, which is one long cry of parents against programs which inculcate judicial processes and a distorted view of events.

These and similar statements, which our Boards have expressed and conveyed to us, do not pretend to any great degree of sophistication based on 'scientific' analysis. If a monster were to break into a home and abuse the children therein, the father would throw him out, and not pause to consult statistical data on the possible evil effects of the abuse. The pulse we feel is that of parents, whose efforts to build serene family relationships and gentle persons, are being frustrated by the hypnotic screen, just as a sex maniac will use candy to subvert the innocent.

Our parents are not concerned about the average child, the European child, the American child, or, for that matter, the Canadian child; they are worried about their own children, under their own roof. And they do not feel obliged to play the constant policeman in that milieu if they can reach out into the surrounding community and shut off the source of pollution. If a nuclear reactor is providing not only electricity to a region, but also radioactive poison, the solution is not to build homes with leaden walls, but to reinforce the protective devices of the reactor, to screen out the noxious influences.

#### A Concrete Sample

The survey carried out by the Lambton County RCSS Board and reported to you only confirms parental instinct in this respect. The Board found that children in the early elementary grades were fairly faithful watchers of 'cartoons', gradually moving up to *Happy Days*, *Welcome Back, Kotter*, *Little House On The Prairie*, with *Six Million Dollar Man* ranking seventh. Some questions were raised from these results with regard to the impact of the interminable *Roadrunner* which might be labelled 'Justice Through TNT'.

But it is also noted that 'other programs', with 1,335 out of 1,486 viewers, included *Baretta*, *Rookies*, *Hawaii Five-O*, *Kojak*, *Starsky and Hutch*,

*Cannon* and similar staples of the man-mauls-man circuit.

This school survey gave every evidence of active control by parents over television fare but also of considerable lack of success. One reason given was the lack of 'family viewing time' regulations in Canada which would eliminate many of the second type of programs. A second reason is the convolutions of network and station rationale for programming. But the main reason could be that, no matter how strongly parents feel, it is difficult for them to attain the Anonymous Adversary on the production and transmitting end, which is a one-way system of mass communications.

Something has to be done and it is certainly a legitimate role of government, in supporting and subsidizing parents in their educational roles, to step into the breach. Your Commission itself is providing a remarkable opportunity for expression of views by those parents who have not yet given up in despair. It is important that something concrete be done and immediately, for children are growing all the time and parents may eventually give up.

### Normal and Abnormal Violence

Before offering specific suggestions, we wish to define more closely the type of television programming which appears to arouse the most concern.

#### 1. Violence In The News

Quite obviously, news programs contain scenes of violence or at least of confrontation. Such productions, however, must cover a wide variety of events, appealing to a wide spectrum of viewers, within a short time span. This tends to restrict excessive preoccupation with one type of news and also prolonged dwelling upon striking, but minute, details. Editors also know that, in the long run, excess loses its shock value, creating disinterest. There are consequently several built-in controls at work on televised newscasts, similar to those that operate in respectable newspapers, to prevent habitual abnormal exploitation of strife. As long as the production reflects reality reasonably enough, the impact on a youthful observer – if he is interested – can be considered

as an inevitable reflection of the struggle for life. In fact, as in the case of Vietnam coverage, it may even provoke lasting revulsion against warfare. We, therefore, do not include news productions in our proposals regarding control of violence.

#### 2. The World Of Make-Believe

From personal experience and from observations by pedagogues, it appears that certain types of dramatized violence are viewed as allegories. The classic tales from an imaginary world, featuring fairy queens and hairy ogres, heroes and villains, rags to riches and man against the elements, whether played out by humans or other living creatures, do not appear to have adverse effect on the viewer who remains conscious that he has entered into a world of make-believe, an idealization of the misty past or mysterious vision of an unpredictable future. *Spaceship* is one example. The basic plot of most of these episodes is found in the shrine of the Book at Jerusalem in the most precious of Dead Sea Scrolls, which deals with the perennial human tug-of-war between the People of Light and the People of Darkness. It might be argued that the accent should be always on the positive, but to so arrange life projections would be a kind of violence in itself, a chimera of peace without effort, an unreal denial of evil. The world of make-believe can present this central wisdom in forms adapted to the world of the viewer, who will forget the actors but remember the plot.

#### 3. Violated Reality

Between the news and the world of symbolic make-believe, there is a wide range of programs which pretend to be based on current reality and which pretend to reflect current codes, but which preach that life is cheap, that our cities especially are dominated by a network of irresistible forces preying upon the normal man, disposing of limitless funds and sophisticated techniques, using threats, torture, beatings, murder routinely. Frequently, the forces of order as depicted dispose of the same arsenal of means and codes of conduct with one difference, that of delivering the final blow or shot in the name of justice. This picture of daily life is not true in Ontario. It is neither real nor make-believe, but one or the other

disguised as one or the other. It gives a warped, distorted, frightening impression of the role and extent of violence in normal life. It prepares the way for more and more acceptable violence in entertainment and in life. It stereotypes humans, including the criminal, into inhumans. It belittles moderation. This is the type of program that must be controlled.

## Recommendations

In its richly documented and aesthetically presented brief to your Commission, the Metropolitan Toronto RCSS Board states (quoting Surgeon General Jesse Steinfeld) 'The data on social phenomena such as television and/or aggressive behaviour will never be clear enough for all social scientists to agree on the formulation of a succinct statement of causality. But there comes a time when the data are sufficient to justify action.'

We accept that rule of public responsibility and add that the witness of concerned parents and citizens, faced with an adversary upon whom it is normally impossible to obtain a grip, cannot be ignored by public authority.

We are aware that in its investigations, your Commission has ranged extensively beyond the narrow confines we have adopted in this presentation. However, we see no reason why the Commission would not make a preliminary interim recommendation directed at the impact of television on our elementary schoolchildren. There is no doubt that television is subject to some public control, as a privileged user of airwaves, and that this basis does not apply to the press. Such a preliminary step would therefore not compromise any further decision regarding non-televised violence. Taking the position of the Metropolitan Separate School Board as a point of departure and sharpening the thrust of observations by other boards, we therefore recommend:

1. that the Province of Ontario set up a television-monitoring board, with representation from the ministries of education, consumers affairs and justice and equal representation from bodies representing parents, teachers and trustees, to grant a 'general' rating to programs or series of programs.

2. that the television-monitoring board be authorized to recommend 'general' rated programs to stations and networks for presentation exclusively during family viewing time, probably from 4:00 to 9:00 p.m. on week days.

3. that, where stations present programs not rated 'general' during family viewing time, the television-monitoring board be authorized to notify the station, the network, the sponsors of advertising during the non-rated program and to publicize the lack of cooperation of these enterprises, if the offense is repeated; that when non-cooperation is persistent, the television-monitoring board be authorized to withdraw public utility services from the station for a stated period, hour or day, including electricity; that, where a regular policy of non-cooperation is evident, the television-monitoring board be authorized to appear before the CRTC at the next hearing re the licence of the offending station to request support of the federal body in the form of penalty or withdrawal.

4. that the television-monitoring board also be authorized to hear complaints and investigate them, following procedures already experienced by the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

5. that the television-monitoring board prepare a 'primer' to assist children and parents in the appreciation of educative and non-violent television programs; to serve in the publicly supported schools of the province; to gradually create an informed and effective community of concerned persons, capable of carrying on through voluntary means, the persuasive work originally confided to the television-monitoring board.

'No more war. No more war.' It may sound like a dream but without it, why work for the future? We adults all bear some wounds of our violent age, including the fear of greater violence than man has ever known. We must, as our ancestors did, place our hopes for a better world in our children. It is too late for us, but we can at least continue to strive against violence, because peace-makers shall be called the Children of God.

*Chris Asseff*  
*Executive Director*

## **Institute of Applied Metaphysics Ottawa**

A young boy and his father are watching a war movie on television. A flame thrower in the hands of our good guys' side has flamed out, burning to an agonizing death, fully detailed, all the crew of a German tank. "It's OK, they're the enemy," is the message father says to son. "When your uncle grew up he went to war and used one of those flame throwers." The son replies: "I don't want to grow up." The effect is to impose on children atrocities of the adult world, convincingly necessary atrocities. After all, they're the enemy. Whether they are the Vietnamese in the newsreels, or the old movie Germans or Western Indians, the message is: they cease to be human, they're not on our side.

*Ms. Helen Reid  
Special Projects Officer*

parents who wish to program in advance their children's viewing, but, as previously mentioned, even such sophisticated equipment is of no value as a means of controlling violent scenes if the parent has no way of determining in advance what violent scenes, if any, are forthcoming.

*Dahn Batchelor*

## **Dahn Batchelor Rexdale**

I don't feel that parents have either the interest or the expertise to choose with 100 per cent accuracy, suitable programs for their children. However, should the industry begin classifying all programs and if such classifications were published in the television Guides, the task would be much simpler and more accurate.

I should like to point out at this time that a Japanese television firm named *Sharp* has developed a programmable tuner which operates by an internal clock. As I understand, this tuner, which is placed away from the set, much like a converter, allows a viewer to program television viewing a week in advance. For example, if he sees a preview of an upcoming program to be shown in three days, he can program the tuner to receive that particular program when it is transmitted. Hence, whenever the viewer turns on his set, he will see a program he previously chose and programmed in his programmable tuner. I have been told that such a tuner will be available to the Canadian market within a year and the cost of such equipment will be approximately \$100.00. Such an automatic tuner would be a blessing to



**James A. McGrath, MP  
St. John's East  
Newfoundland**

On March 28, 1974, a mother in Calgary, Alberta, found her 13-year-old son, David Andrew Coombes, in a bedroom closet, hanged by a cloth belt. Schoolmates testified that David had been at a party where he and other youngsters emulated a mock hanging performed by the American rock star Alice Cooper, on a cable-television program from Spokane, Washington. David's father testified the boy bragged to his sister he could do the execution trick himself. The Provincial Chief Coroner for Alberta, Dr. Max M. Cantor, said in his report, and I quote:

From the evidence submitted, we are of the opinion that David was trying to emulate a program on television depicting how an entertainer could survive the act of hanging.

Dr. Cantor goes on to recommend, and again I quote:

We should severely criticize such television programs being shown because it is too easy for teenagers to try to duplicate.

And he goes on . . .

We suggest the government take definite and immediate steps to ban these programs of violence.

Dr. Cantor's recommendations were supported by the findings of the jury which concluded, and I quote:

From the evidence submitted, we are of the opinion that David was trying to emulate the television program. We severely criticize such television programs being shown and we suggest the government take definite and immediate steps to ban these programs of violence.

The Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Appeal has urged the entertainment industry to purge itself, and I quote, "to purge themselves of excessive violence as part of an attack on urban crime".

Mr. Justice Gale goes on to say (February 11, 1975) "I have seen television programs that are simply shocking in the way violence is portrayed."

According to a Canadian Press dispatch of October 9, 1975, Monsieur Jacques Hebert, a Commissioner of the CRTC, referred to violence shown on French-language television programs in

the city of Montreal as "odious" and "absolutely disgusting". Monsieur Hebert said it was "an unforgivable crime" for television stations and cable companies to show violent programs during daytime and early evening hours when children are watching. Monsieur Hebert, who seems to think the CRTC is powerless to act – an opinion, I might say, that is not shared by many outside of the CRTC – is quoted as saying:

"so my only resort as a citizen and a member of the CRTC is to tell you how disgusted I feel and to call upon your conscience."

At the outset, I think it is necessary to get one thing straight – the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commission, under the authority vested in it by Parliament in the Broadcasting Act, has the power under Section 16 of the Act to, and I quote:

"make regulations applicable to all persons holding broadcasting licenses, or to all persons holding broadcasting licenses of one or more classes".

Apart from Monsieur Hebert's statement as reported by Canadian Press, the only response from the CRTC to date has been the sponsoring of the Symposium on Television Violence which was held at Queen's University, August 24th to 26th, 1975, to which the distinguished Chairperson of this Commission made an outstanding contribution. In the absence of any initiatives by the Federal Government, I introduced a bill in the House of Commons in February of this year, the purpose of which is to amend the Broadcasting Act, which would make it mandatory for the CRTC to establish guidelines respecting the portrayal of sex and violence during the broadcast of a television program. Following the introduction of my bill, I received an undertaking from the then Minister of Communications that the CRTC would consider holding public hearings across the country on the subject of my bill. Since that time, of course, the initiative and leadership has come from the Government of Ontario, and I commend the Premier of Ontario and his colleagues for setting up this Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry.

I am grateful to the Commission for giving me this opportunity to appear before it at its first hearing. I suppose my purpose in being here today

is to help to focus public attention on the lack of government action and to generate concern and to suggest some positive reforms. A number of countries, including, for example, Sweden, France and Mexico, have already acted to reduce television violence. In the United States, the Federal Communications Commission, in conjunction with the three American networks, is working to limit prime-time exposure to violence in periods that have been designated as family-viewing hours. Mexico, which is in a similar position to Canada vis-a-vis U.S. television, has banned all United States' programs that contain scenes of violence.

According to Dr. Frederic Wertham, who has written a book on the subject, entitled *A Sign for Cain: An Exploration of Human Violence*, "human violence, factual and fictional is highly contagious. The incidence of actual violence depends on some extent on the degree to which a society tolerates it in fact and in fiction". Dr. Wertham goes on to say, "when the environment tolerates violence, violent behaviour is apt to happen". Our society is fostering violence by its heavy preoccupation with violence on the stage, in films, and especially on television.

Although your terms of reference cover the entire spectrum of violence in the communications industry, I would like to address myself to what I consider to be the most important facet of your study, i.e. violence on television and its impact on our society. According to Statistics Canada, 97 per cent of Canadian homes have one or more television sets. According to the Nielsen Television Index, pre-school children aged three to five who are at home watch television an average of 54 hours each week, or, approximately 64 per cent of their waking hours. By the time a child is five and reaches kindergarten, he has spent more time watching television than a liberal arts student spends in the classroom throughout his four years in university. The National Commission on Crime and Violence reports that American children and youth spend from one-quarter to one-half of their waking hours watching television, with only sleep consuming more of their time.

By the time a child is 14 and in the eighth grade, he has watched the violent assault or destruction

of nearly 18,000 human beings on television. During the average year, an older child attends school 980 hours and watches television for 1,340 hours, so that by the time he graduates from high school, he will have spent between 11,000 and 12,000 hours in the classroom and more than 22,000 in front of the television set.

It has been concluded by eminent behavioural scientists that the introduction of television changes the way of life of society more drastically than any other social innovation we have ever seen. It affects everything we do, including our eating habits, sleeping habits, and drastically changes a child's learning habits. There is no doubt that television has replaced the written word. Let us examine then, for a moment, what Canadians are exposed to on television. The quantity of violence on the television screen is staggering. According to evidence released by the Surgeon General in his report on television violence, so much is compressed into a single evening, that to reach the same audience, a play would have to run in the theatre, to full houses, for half a century. According to testimony, a child may see in 30 minutes of television as much violence as most adults experience in a lifetime. It is easy for young minds to understand because it is vivid and graphic, and above all, it is cruel and it is presented as a way of life. According to the Media Action Research Centre in the United States, in a study of the 1974-75 television season, 83 per cent of all children's programs were "dense with violence". This compares with 17 per cent for the 1954-55 season. Let us take Saturday morning cartoons which most of our children watch. The same Action Research Centre found that these programs averaged one act of aggression every minute. I will name the programs referred to because they are available, certainly, throughout this province on the cable system: *The Bugs Bunny Show*, *The Pink Panther*, *Speed Buggy*, and *Wheely and the Chopper Bunch*. All of these programs, according to the television guide, are brought into Canada on the cable system.

Dr. Robert M. Liebert, a psychologist at the State University of New York, and one of the principal investigators for the Surgeon General, puts it this way, "The more violence and aggression a youngster sees on television,

regardless of his age, sex, or social background, the more aggressive he is likely to be in his own attitudes and behaviour." According to Dr. Liebert, this does not merely affect youngsters who are in some way abnormal, but rather this fact applies to a large number of perfectly normal, healthy children. Dr. Liebert arrived at that conclusion from analyzing more than 50 studies covering the behaviour of 10,000 children between the ages of three and 19. Dr. Liebert added that one significant study, the Lefkowitz study, showed that "it was not a boy's home life, not his school performance, not his family background, but the amount of television violence he viewed at age nine which was the single, most important determinant of how aggressive he was ten years later at age 19". I hope that Dr. Liebert will be invited to give evidence to this Commission.

In 1972, the United States Surgeon General reported to Congress on the findings of a two-year study by a Special Scientific Advisory Committee on television and social behaviour. The findings of that report are contained in 11 volumes and were summed up by the Surgeon General himself when he appeared before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee reviewing the report, and I quote:

The overwhelming consensus and the unanimous Scientific Advisory Committee's report indicate that televised violence, indeed, does have an adverse effect on certain members of our society . . . It is clear to me that the causal relationship between televised violence and antisocial behaviour is sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action . . . There comes a time when the data are sufficient to justify action. That time has come.

It is rather interesting to note that, when the same Surgeon General brought in a report several years earlier, establishing a direct link between lung cancer and cigarette smoking, there was an immediate and positive response from industry and government, not only in the United States, but in our own country as well. Cigarette advertising is banned from television and all cigarette packages are clearly stamped with a warning that cigarette smoking is harmful to health. Yet there had been no similar response by government or industry to the conclusive findings of the same authority in 1972 regarding violence on television.

No one is safe, adult or child, from the rising

level of television-stimulated violence in our society. Those of us who are careful and diligent enough, and conscientious enough, to carefully regulate our children's television fare, and hence protect them from a great deal of this violence, could very well find our children the victims of violent young people whose parents are, indeed, not so conscientious and who, in fact, abdicate this important aspect of parental responsibility. So, in that regard, no one is safe.

Up to now, I have been addressing myself to the overall impact of television violence on children. I would now like to address myself to the broader spectrum, and that is the impact of television violence on society as a whole. You will forgive me, but I must once again resort to statistics to present my argument. According to the latest figures released by Statistics Canada, crimes of violence are on the increase in this country, and especially in this province. It is interesting to point out that the rate of increase in violent crime in the Province of Ontario thus far this year is more than double the national average. Up to the present time, the rate of increase in the Province of Ontario in the number of violent crimes over last year's rate is 9.2 per cent. For example, crimes involving the use of firearms have increased this year by a rate of 129.1 per cent over last year, and again, I am quoting from Statistics Canada Service Bulletin on Law Enforcement, Judicial, and Correctional Statistics released in August of this year. Robberies in Ontario are up 64.6 per cent over the same period last year. The increase in the rate of violent crime in this province and in Canada is indeed alarming. The Solicitor-General for Canada has already indicated that his department is presently involved in assessing the various studies to determine whether or not there is a correlation between the increases in the crimes of violence and violence on the media. There is no doubt in my mind that this increase in the rate of violent crime is linked with television violence. According to the results of a Gallup Poll which were published in *The Toronto Star* on May 7, 1975, 61 per cent of those polled in a nation-wide survey believed that television violence develops aggressive behaviour in adults. According to the survey, "six of ten Canadians today believe that young children who are exposed to a considerable



amount of violence on television are more likely to become overly aggressive adults than are those not so exposed". It is interesting to note that, of the 61 per cent who felt that television violence could affect children and develop in them aggressive behaviour, the largest group, representing 23 per cent, felt that it was the responsibility of both governments and parents – but it is significant that another 20 per cent placed the responsibility solely with government. As far back as 1970, the Senate Committee on the Mass Media found in a survey that 76 per cent of those polled in all ten provinces felt that there was need for government action with respect to television violence. I am firmly convinced that there is sufficient evidence and there is a sufficient degree of concern throughout this country to warrant immediate government action in regard to television violence.

In this regard, I hope that the findings of this Royal Commission will bring about a situation where the Government of Ontario will be sufficiently impressed to take action on its own accord and to press the Government of Canada to move within the constitutional responsibility which is theirs to bring in the necessary regulations under the Broadcasting Act.

Most of the studies referred to in this brief are American. However, they are relevant since most television violence is contained in United States programs that come to Canada through U.S. border television stations and by the importation of canned television programs which are dumped on the Canadian market by the three U.S. networks.

The following examples are taken from studies conducted in the United States by Dr. Victor B. Cline and Eugene H. Methvin of Reader's Digest.

#### Item

Shortly after a Boston television station showed the movie *Fuzz*, depicting a group of youths dousing a derelict with gasoline and setting him afire for kicks, a woman was burned to death in that city – literally turned into a human torch under almost identical circumstances. Three weeks later, in Miami, Florida, the same movie was shown. Four 12- and 13-year olds, having

seen the movie, doused three alcoholics with lighter fluid and set them on fire.

#### Item

On September 10, 1974, NBC-TV presented, during prime time, a made-for-television film, entitled *Born Innocent*, which showed in explicit fashion the sexual violation of a young girl by female inmates in a juvenile detention home. Later, a California mother sued NBC and the San Francisco television station that had aired the film for \$11 million, charging that this show had inspired three girls, ages 10 to 15 years, to commit a similar attack on her nine-year-old daughter and an eight-year-old friend three days after the film was aired.

#### Item

On December 13, 1966, over the direct protest of the American Airline Pilots Association, NBC-TV aired a program entitled *The Doomsday Flight*, in which a bomb was planted aboard an airliner by a man who waits until the plane is airborne and telephones the airline with an offer to reveal the bomb's location in exchange for a huge ransom. The pilots' fears were well-justified. Even before the program ended, one bomb threat occurred, and in the next week major airlines received 12 additional threats. By the end of the month, bomb threats had increased more than 800 per cent over the previous month. In May, 1971, when the movie was broadcast in Australia, Qantas Airlines was victimized to the tune of \$500,000 by a duplicate scheme paralleling the film that threatened the lives of 116 passengers en route to Hong Kong.

#### Item

An episode of the television program *Mannix* was shown to a group of eight-to-11-year-olds by a Florida psychologist. A second group got an excerpt from a baseball telecast. Then both groups were exposed to a staged fistfight between two pre-schoolers. The children who had just watched *Mannix* were markedly slower to try to break up the fight between the younger children. Psychologists concluded: "Violent television programs may not only increase a child's aggressive behaviour, it may also condition him to tolerate it in others."



### Item

On May 31, 1974, two teenagers emulated a crime they had seen on the program *Adam-12* on NBC-TV two weeks earlier. They held 25 people hostage in a suburban bank. During the seven-hour ordeal they taped loaded shotguns to the heads of the three hostages, extracted \$1 million in ransom, and were given television time to harangue the public before they were talked into surrendering. It is interesting to note the comments of the judge in passing sentence on these three individuals, and I quote:

Any television show as crude and suggestive as the *Adam-12* show should be banned.

### Item

On November 26, 1972, NBC's *Ironside* villain locked a belt-time bomb around a scientist who could escape only by arranging the release of three prisoners. Three days later, in Gardena, California, a man forced an elderly woman to strap a similar device around her waist and withdraw her life savings. A few days later in Hartford, Connecticut, another man was charged with plotting the same sort of extortion-kidnap attempt against a businessman's daughter.

### Item

Doctors at the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Centre reported that two boys, eight- and 12-years-old, were seriously injured and a number of others in that age category received minor injuries after attempting Evel Knievel's widely publicized skycycle exploits. After talks with the young patients and their parents, the authorities at the hospital noted a dangerous pattern to the stunts. The boys were building crude wooden ramps, pedalling their bicycles up the ramps, and then trying to catapult over a line of trash cans.

### Item

In Atlanta, a 31-year-old holdup man who had no prior criminal record, seized four women hostages in a downtown bank, demanded and got \$200,000 and a get-away car. He told an FBI agent at the scene, "I know how you FBI people work. I watch television on Sunday nights."

I am satisfied that social control for the protection of society is unrelated to censorship and interference with civil liberties. History clearly shows that regulations to protect children and adults, be they with regard to child labour, food, drink, arms, pornography, or what have you, have not played a role in the abridgement of political or civil liberties. I find it is contradictory to refer to censorship when we already have laws which govern liquor and beer advertising, tobacco advertising, and children's television advertising. I totally reject the censorship argument. I believe it is clearly the responsibility of the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, under the powers delegated to it under the Broadcasting Act, to regulate broadcasting in Canada and to impose strict guidelines and regulations. For the Commission to take the position, as they have often done, that they were not set up to be censors is, in my opinion, a total abdication of their responsibility to the people of Canada.

In conclusion, I would like to repeat that it is my hope that the findings of this Commission will result in action being taken by the Government of Ontario with respect to films, and further, that the findings of the Commission will be such that pressure will be brought to bear on the Government of Canada to take the necessary steps to restrict the importation of canned television programs that contain scenes of violence, and still further, that regulations and guidelines will be put into place to restrict the importation of these programs through the cable system. These guidelines and regulations would, of course, apply equally to programs produced in Canada. I may say, in conclusion, that I have no faith whatsoever in the ability of the communications industry to regulate itself in this regard. Thank you.

*James A. McGrath*

## Sharron McLachlan, Mississauga

### A Study of Pro-Social and Anti-Social Values in Canadian Pre-School Television

For this submission a study was conducted to examine the pro-social and anti-social behaviour presented on Canadian pre-school programs. Four shows were rated on five consecutive weekdays on a number of pro-social and anti-social values. In addition, a number of general ratings were made on the effectiveness of each program. Results were presented and a number of recommendations were made.

As a parent of pre-school children and a former kindergarten teacher, I am very concerned about the quality of the television programs my children watch. The most critical time in the development of a child's values and concepts come during the years from birth to age five. The child is at the most impressionable stage of his development and learns mainly by participating actively and copying others. In addition, the pre-schooler is usually unable to distinguish the realities of life from the unrealities of fantasy as seen on television. Since it has been estimated that a three- to five-year-old at home, spends 64 per cent of his waking hours watching television – Rutstein (1972) it is, therefore, extremely important to examine what programs are available to the pre-schooler with a view either to giving them more support or requiring them to meet some criteria before being aired.

While reading the bibliography and Interim Report of The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry, it became apparent that there has been little research on the Canadian-produced pre-school programming. Since our children are Canadian, it would seem not only interesting but also essential that we examine our own programs. The present study was undertaken to look at Canadian pre-school programs, in an attempt to identify some of the basic human values expressed in them.

Four shows were examined: *Mr. Dress-Up*, *Friendly Giant*, *Uncle Bobby* and *Polka Dot Door*. Both the pro-social and anti-social content of these programs were studied. Sixteen categories

were examined while the shows were in progress and the overall effect of each show was rated immediately following each broadcast.

### Method

Four pre-school television programs were watched on five consecutive week days. The four programs, their station, and the viewing time were as follows:

*Friendly Giant* (15 min.) 8:45-9:00 AM CBLT

*Mr. Dress-Up* 10:30-11:00 AM CBLT

*Uncle Bobby*\* 12:00-12:30 PM CFTO

*Polka Dot Door* 6:00-6:30 PM CICA

Some of the values studied are from those outlined in *The Formative Years*, Ontario's latest curriculum guide for the primary and junior grades, prepared by the Department of Education (1975). They are also a selection from the values identified by the research of Milton Rokeach (1972) and used in his Value Survey, a standardized value test developed in 1967.

The following is a list of the values studied with a brief definition of each.

### Pro-Social Values

1. Caring: Were the characters considerate, thoughtful, or concerned about others?
2. Helping: Did the characters help others physically or support others' ideas in order to build up their self-esteem?
3. Cleanliness: Were the characters neat and tidy and did they respect the rights of others to have things in order?
4. True Friendship: Were the characters supportive in their actions and dialogue with their friends?
5. Honesty: Were the characters honest both in the material presented and in actions?
6. Responsibility: Were the characters responsible, dependable and reliable?
7. Obedience: Were the characters dutiful and respectful of others?
8. Politeness: Did the characters reflect an attitude of courtesy and good manners?

### Anti-social Values

1. Uncaring: Were the characters inconsiderate

\**Uncle Bobby* was the only show which carried commercials.

or thoughtless about others? e.g. Did they insult others?

2. Unhelpful: Were the characters not helpful to others? Did they hinder others either mentally or physically?

3. Unclean: Did the characters appear untidy or leave things lying about?

4. Not True Friendship: Were the characters disloyal or unsupportive in their friendship?

5. Dishonest: Were the characters dishonest in the material presented or in their actions?

6. Irresponsible: Were the characters irresponsible, undependable, or unreliable?

7. Disobedient: Were the characters undutiful or disrespectful of others?

8. Impolite: Were the characters impolite or discourteous of others?

An attempt was made to note both the starting time and duration of the value and an indication made as to how the value was expressed, either verbally or visually. If the value expressed was anti-social or negative, a notation was made as to how effectively the behaviour was used. That is, were the children shown effective ways to deal with the anti-social behaviour or was it left to stand on its own? If any act was considered as mental or physical violence, that too was noted and the example written down. For the purposes of this report, frequency data only is given.

Appendix A is a replica of the check sheet used while watching the programs. An attempt was made to record the examples word for word, although this was not always possible when events happened in rapid succession.

At the end of each program an evaluation was made of the general effect of the show. A seven-point scale (commonly called a "semantic differential") was used for evaluating nine values. Any spontaneous comments or actions by my children were noted as well. (The nine rating scales are given in Appendix A.)

## Results

*Occurrence of values.* A total of 1537 values were charted from the 20 telecasts rated. Caring acts, the most frequently occurring value, took place on 445 occasions. Examples of politeness and true friendship also occurred frequently. (Table 1

reports the frequency of each of the eight pro-social and eight opposite anti-social values.)

Actions which were impolite, uncaring or irresponsible were the most frequently expressed anti-social values, occurring 72, 50, and 43 times respectively. Pro-social values outnumbered anti-social ones by six to one.

In Table 2, the total number of pro-social and anti-social values for each show is summarized. The ratio of pro-social: anti-social content varied from 46:1 for *Friendly Giant* to 2:1 for *Uncle Bobby*. Needless to say, the differences among the shows were found to be significant when a statistical test was applied (chi square = 182.5,  $df=3$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Four chi square tests were applied to compare each program to all the others and indicated that *Friendly Giant* had a greater proportion of pro-social values than the remaining three programs. This was also true of *Mr. Dress-Up*. *Polka Dot Door* was not different than the other three and *Uncle Bobby* had significantly fewer pro-social values than the others.

Not all anti-social actions, however, are negative in their impact. If such values are dealt with so that the child viewer is shown an effective way to deal with them, they may be considered to have an educational impact. Consequently, the anti-social values were rated on whether they were adequately resolved. Table 3 gives the results when the anti-social values which were resolved were combined with the pro-social values. No unresolved anti-social acts remained in *Friendly Giant*, one remained in *Mr. Dress-Up*, 26 in *Uncle Bobby*, and six in *Polka Dot Door*. The proportion of anti-social acts which were not dealt with in an educative manner, differed considerably among the four shows. A statistical test indicated that these differences to be significant (chi square = 229.5,  $df=3$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

*Violence.* A large number of violent acts were not anticipated during these programs but ratings were made when they occurred. Mental violence consisted of an expression of those anti-social values reported above which undermined the self-esteem of others. These were verbal actions such as insults or hostile remarks. Physical violence, which was not included in the anti-social values reported previously, was defined as any overtly violent act such as kicking, hitting or poking a

Table 1.

Frequency of Pro-social and Anti-social Activities during a Five Day Period in Four Canadian Pre-School Television Programs

Activity	Program								Totals	
	<i>Friendly Giant</i>		<i>Mr. Dress-Up</i>		<i>Uncle Bobby</i>		<i>Polka Dot Door</i>		pro-social	anti-social
	pro-social	anti-social	pro-social	anti-social	pro-social	anti-social	pro-social	anti-social	pro-social	anti-social
Caring	84		193		72		96		445	
Uncaring		0		10		27		13		50
Helping	13		64		23		37		137	
Unhelping		0		0		1		0		1
Clean	11		16		2		5		34	
Unclean		0		0		3		6		9
True Friendship	41		90		28		53		212	
Not True Friendship		0		6		12		4		22
Honesty	16		44		19		26		105	
Dishonesty		0		0		9		1		10
Responsible	28		78		11		10		127	
Irresponsible		4		10		17		12		43
Obedient	8		13		11		9		41	
Disobedient		0		1		0		1		2
Polite	30		74		68		55		227	
Impolite		1		8		51		12		72

Table 2.

Total Number of Pro-social and Anti-social Activities during a Five Day Period in Four Canadian Pre-school Television Programs

Program	Number of Pro-social Activities	Number of Anti-social Activities	Ratio of Pro-social: Anti-social Activities
<i>Friendly Giant</i>	231	5	46:1
<i>Mr. Dress-Up</i>	572	35	16:1
<i>Uncle Bobby</i>	234	120	2:1
<i>Polka Dot Door</i>	291	49	6:1

Table 3.

Total Number of Pro-social and Resolved Anti-social vs. Unresolved Anti-social Activities during a Five Day Period in Four Canadian Pre-school Television Programs

Program	Number of Pro-social and Resolved Anti-social Acts	Number of Unresolved Anti-social Acts	Ratio of Pro-social and Resolved Anti-social Acts: Unresolved Anti-social Acts
<i>Friendly Giant</i>	236	0	all educational
<i>Mr. Dress-Up</i>	606	1	606:1
<i>Uncle Bobby</i>	276	78	4:1
<i>Polka Dot Door</i>	331	9	37:1



**Table 4.**

Frequency of Mentally and Physically Violent Acts in Five Consecutive Days of Canadian Pre-school Television Programs

Program	No. of Mentally Violent Acts <sup>a</sup>			No. of Physically Violent Acts <sup>b</sup>		
	Resolved	Unresolved	Total	Resolved	Unresolved	Total
<i>Friendly Giant</i>	0	0	0	4	0	4
<i>Mr. Dress-Up</i>	12	1	13	4	0	4
<i>Uncle Bobby</i>	0	41	41	0	26	26
<i>Polka Dot Door</i>	6	0	6	5	6	11

<sup>a</sup>Included in the anti-social acts reported in Table 1.

<sup>b</sup>Not included in the anti-social acts reported in Table 1.

**Table 5.**

Average Evaluations of Five Consecutive Days of Canadian Pre-school Television Programs

Rating Scale <sup>a</sup>	Program				F Ratio (df=3/16)
	<i>Friendly Giant</i>	<i>Mr. Dress-Up</i>	<i>Uncle Bobby</i>	<i>Polka Dot Door</i>	
Non-violent (vs. violent)	6.6	6.4	2.6	5.8	19.3**
Sad (vs. cheerful)	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.4	0.2
Dishonest (vs. honest)	1.0	1.0	3.2	1.0	20.2**
Low standards (vs. high standards)	1.0	1.0	6.0	1.4	66.2**
Not foolish (vs. foolish)	6.8	6.8	1.2	7.0	267.9**
Not enjoyable (vs. enjoyable)	1.0	1.0	2.8	1.0	81.0**
Antagonistic (vs. friendly)	1.0	1.2	2.2	1.2	9.8**
Kind (vs. cruel)	7.0	6.8	3.4	5.2	8.4*
Creative (vs. uncreative)	6.6	6.8	3.6	6.6	13.1**

<sup>a</sup>Each 7-point semantic differential scale was rated immediately after each of the programs. Ratings for all five occasions on which a given program was viewed were averaged to give scores with a possible range between 1 and 7.

\* $p < .005$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ .

person, indiscriminate throwing of objects and, in one instance, blowing a whistle in someone's ear.

Table 4 reports these results. A total of 104 violent acts occurred, 60 mentally, 44 physically. No mentally violent acts were found in *Friendly Giant*; 11 occurred in *Mr. Dress-Up* and all but one was used in an educative fashion; 41 occurred in *Uncle Bobby*, none of which was resolved; six took place on *Polka Dot Door* with six of these being resolved.

*Overall evaluations.* The ratings made at the end of each program on the scale of Appendix A were averaged over the five occasions. The mean ratings are reported in Table 5. These average ratings speak for themselves and, although not strictly necessary, each was subjected to statistical analysis. Analyses of variance were computed and the resulting F ratios are listed in the last column of Table 5. When significant, the F ratio indicated reliable differences occurred among the groups. (The larger the F ratio the greater the difference.) On eight of the nine dimensions rated, significant differences were found. Inspection of the mean scores in Table 5 indicates that *Friendly Giant*, *Mr. Dress-Up* and *Polka Dot Door* were generally found to be more non-violent, to be less dishonest, to have higher standards, to be less foolish, to be more enjoyable, to be less antagonistic, to be more kind and to be more creative than *Uncle Bobby*. The shows were equal only in being all relatively cheerful.

## Discussion

The three shows, *Polka Dot Door*, *Friendly Giant*, and *Mr. Dress-Up*, all score very high on pro-social values and low on anti-social values. In almost every case, anti-social behaviour or conversation has been used in a constructive way. These shows treat anti-social acts as an expected element of life and show effective ways to deal with them. Since our children are living in a world where they meet all types of behaviour, this kind of program

may help the youngsters to cope with similar real life situations.

*Uncle Bobby*, on the other hand, does not seem to have this redeeming quality. Almost all of the anti-social acts seen on this show serve no purpose that this viewer could see. What purpose can there be in telling a child, "You've got dirty knees! Go home and wash them!" or saying, "You're one of the dummies," to someone else. What justification can be made for blowing a whistle as hard as possible in someone's ear, throwing an umbrella for no discernible reason or throwing puppets up in the air?

It was not uncommon to hear snide comments or laughing in the background during *Uncle Bobby*. Most of the jokes and skits were over the heads of pre-schoolers. The songs were mostly adult songs and, although that part of the program was liked best by my children (it was the only time they stopped playing to watch), children's songs would have been much better suited to the group they are supposedly aiming at.

Bimbo, the birthday clown, must disappoint many children. From a pocket full of letters, only one name is mentioned, when in a few moments a list of names could be shown or read and all of them wished a happy birthday.

In an article in *The Toronto Star*, February 8, 1973, Vivian Horner, a New York education professor and Director of Research for Children's Television Workshop, is noted as saying that "any program that's considered harmful or destructive should be stopped" and furthermore "it shouldn't be necessary to do research to show that a program is harmful – the onus should be on the producer to prove that it isn't". It would be interesting to see how the producers of *Uncle Bobby* would respond to this statement.

My children became most actively involved during *Polka Dot Door*. They felt free to join in the marching and imagination games and were very sensitive to someone being left out. (One child said, "Humpty didn't get anything to eat! Maybe he will tomorrow.") They watched almost every minute of the shows and were very sad to see them go off the air. (One child said, "Polka Dot Door, come back on!")

*Mr. Dress-Up* gave the children the most ideas for creative play and crafts. For example, they

wanted to make flowers when they saw Casey and Mr. Dress-Up doing it and hunted for their top when they saw Mr. Dress-Up using his. At the end of each program they were both very anxious to know when it would return.

They particularly enjoyed the music shows on *Friendly Giant* but also like the drawing that was done and wanted their own crayons. One child particularly liked the fantasy of the cow and moon at the end of each show.

In comparison to reports that have been published on *Sesame Street* – Pigge (1972); Ratliff & Ratliff (1972), it would seem our own programs, *Friendly Giant*, *Mr. Dress-Up* and *Polka Dot Door*, are superior. They did not show unnecessary aggression or other anti-social behaviour and they did not push rote learning of numbers and letters at the children. Although the pace of the Canadian shows was much more gentle and soothing, the incidents were not dragged out past the level of the child's attention span. It would

thus seem advantageous to spend more time and money developing our own Canadian pre-school programs. The money which now goes to the American-produced *Sesame Street* (and cartoons as well) might be better spent on an entirely Canadian show even if it is cut down to a half-hour program.

The Interim Report cites the observation that "There may be as many as 23 violent episodes in every hour of cartoons". Surely a program that has anywhere from 19-68 (*Mr. Dress-Up*) or eight to 25 (*Polka Dot Door*) caring acts per half hour show would seem worth supporting. The report also states, "we lack data of how much pro-social content there is and how it compares with the nature and proportions of media violence".

Should it not, therefore, be the next step to initiate research in this area? It is hoped that the present study will give some starting point for further research in this crucial area.

## Appendix A

	Extremely	Quite	Slightly	Neutral	Slightly	Quite	Extremely	
Violent	— ( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	Non-Violent
Cheerful	— ( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	Sad
Honest	— ( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	Dishonest
High Standards	— ( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	Low Standards
Foolish	— ( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	Not Foolish
Enjoyable	— ( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	Not Enjoyable
Friendly	— ( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	Antagonistic
Cruel	— ( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	Kind
Uncreative	— ( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	( ) —	Creative

## Recommendations

1. Make more financial support available to *Mr. Dress-Up*, *Polka Dot Door* and *Friendly Giant*.
2. Make available the funds and resources to produce more of our own Canadian pre-school shows.
3. Reduce spending on American shows like *Sesame Street* and cartoons.
4. Remove *Uncle Bobby* from the networks or require the show to meet some satisfactory level of production better suited to our children's needs.
5. A booklet be published on how parents can effectively use television and other media as a resource for communication and interaction with their children, giving some of the results of research that has been done in a language they can understand.
6. Fund research and evaluation studies which examine the pro-social content and anti-social content of television programs.

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## Joan Gauthier, Ph.D. Associate Professor Department of Psychology Brock University St. Catharines

This evening I would like to discuss with you some of my thoughts and research relating to the portrayal of violence on television, especially as it relates to children.

Reality refers to events as they occur, and no medium can record or replicate an event completely. Therefore, media contents are images, creations or representations, whether their intent is to entertain, inform or educate. Since television programs are inventions, it is important to examine the presentation techniques associated with program viewing. These include not only the production and distribution aspects of the program but also the viewing conditions at the time the program is seen. The second area of focus is the reception strategies of the viewer which include the looking behaviour of the child, his reactions to the people and information and his resultant behaviour.

Children watch a great deal of television and much of it contains violence. This has been well documented by several researchers (including Himmelweit et al, 1958; Larsen, 1968; and Liebert, et al, 1973). Schram, Lyle and Parker (1961) stated that the average child, from age three through 16, spends more total time on television than in school. Wertham (1966) has calculated that the average child, from age five to 14, sees on the screen the violent destruction of more than 12,000 people. While these statistics are sensational, they tell us very little about the viewing behaviour and preferences of particular children. Two of my students, Betty Scollay and Alice White recently investigated the types of programs available to the viewer in the St. Catharines area, the nature of crime and destruction contained in programs and the program preferences of 123 children between ages six and 11 years.

*During the viewing times of 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on weeknights, Scollay and White found that 43.93 per cent of the available programs (crime drama, movies, dramas, westerns and cartoons)*



*portrayed crime and violence.* (See Table 1.) The distribution of crime and destruction as listed in the television guide for a one-week period included 65 accidents (personal injury and property damage), 33 arsons, eight bombings, 19 embezzlements and/or extortions, 26 kidnappings, 70 murders and/or suicides, 52 acts of resisting or interfering with a law enforcement agent, 23 robberies and/or thefts, and 37 threats (verbal or overt, involving a deadly weapon). Of these 333 incidents, 309 occurred outside school hours when most children have access to television (see Table 2). When the available programs were actually viewed (over a Sunday to Sunday period between 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.), 745 incidents of crime and destruction occurred for an average of *six violent incidents per hour*. The hours with the highest frequency of violent acts per hour were the 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. daily time slot and Saturday morning from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon (See Table 3). Cartoons had an average of 11.2 violent incidents per hour, with the Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour having 48 violent acts on the date viewed (see Table 4).

Since violence is clearly prevalent on television, it is necessary to ask whether children watch it and whether they prefer it. The children studied reported watching television primarily between 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. weekdays and 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon Saturday mornings (about 70 per cent each) while over half (55 per cent) also watched on Sunday evening. (See Table 5). Seventy-two of the 123 children (58.5 per cent) indicated that one of the available crime drama programs was their favourite, while 51 (41.5 per cent) preferred other types of programs. (See Table 6). Scollay and White also found evidence that the children watched primarily American stations, preferring Buffalo 29 and Buffalo 7 (47.97 per cent and 22.76 per cent respectively, total 70.73 per cent) on weekdays and Buffalo 7 on Saturday mornings (73.98 per cent), although Toronto 5 was preferred on Saturday afternoon (79.70 per cent) and Saturday evening (39.84 per cent), (See Table 7).

Several explanations of the effects of viewing violence have been proposed, with the most popular being the catharsis hypothesis and the imitation hypothesis. Aristotle probably originated the catharsis hypothesis when he speculated

that dramatic performances could purge the audience of feelings of grief, fear and pity. In a more modern version of catharsis, Feshbach and Singer (1971) have suggested that television may stimulate fantasies which substitute for overt behaviour thereby reducing arousal and resulting in less aggressive behaviour.

Bandura and Walters (1963) found that the viewing of aggressive models resulted in relatively more aggressive behaviour in the observer. This occurred whether the observer viewed a real life, filmed or cartoon model. In a series of studies, the model's influence on the observer was shown to be contingent upon such factors as the response consequences to the model and particular qualities of the model including prestige, status, competence and control over rewarding resources.

Bandura and Walters (1963) stated that effective models need not be exemplary but may also be symbolic as in written or oral instructions, pictures, et cetera. In addition, one study (Bandura, Grusec & Menlove, 1966) demonstrated that symbolization enhanced delayed reproduction of a filmed model's responses.

There is little empirical evidence to support the catharsis hypothesis, while the imitation hypothesis ignores many of the facts on which complex behaviour is contingent. It seems that a more comprehensive model is required which would include maturational, social and cognitive components. My own research has attempted to include these components in studies of presentation techniques and reception strategies.

In one study a male actor described pictures on blocks to young children (Stack-the-Blocks Game, see Grushcow & Gauthier). The child was required to select the correct block and place it on a stacking peg. Since children tend to sit or lie on the floor, close to the television monitor, both the size of the actor and the position of the monitor were varied. The actor was videotaped such that the camera was at eye level, he looked directly into the lens and only the head was visible. On a 25" monitor, the large head version measured 14" from chin to hair line (larger than life size), while the small head version measured 4". The monitor was viewed from one of three heights, eye level, 30° above eye level and 30° below eye level, with the face of the screen perpendicular to the line of

vision of the subject in all three height positions. The two sizes and three heights produced six experimental conditions with four males and four females from each of Kindergarten and Grade Two in each of the six conditions (total 96 Ss). Each child viewed the actor under only one of the six conditions with the verbal message identical across conditions.

The Kindergarten children performed better when the head was large, while this factor did not produce differential performance for the Grade Two children (See Figure I). The younger children seem to associate authority or power with size, while the older children, who performed better as a group, seem to be responding to other features. Figure II shows that the large head in the high position effectively results in high performance for both boys and girls. Girls perform very poorly both when the small head is high and when the large head is at eye level. Evidently girls respond negatively both to the contradiction of small size in the high position and to the large male face at eye level (the peer position). Boys perform most poorly when the monitor is in the lower position (small or large head) and when the small head is at eye level. This suggests that boys respond positively to the large size of the male actor when he is at the level of peer (eye level) or authority (high) but to the small size of the actor only in the high position.

The position of the monitor influenced both the frequency and duration of looking behaviour. The children looked most frequently when the monitor was in the lower position (see Figure III) but longest when the monitor was in the high position (see Figure IV). Since the total time spent looking at the monitor was the same for all three heights, the children exhibited different patterns of looking behaviour. When the monitor was in the high position, the children used fewer but longer looks at the actor. When the monitor was low, they looked frequently but briefly at the actor. Monitor height also produced sex differences in frequency of looking. Males looked most often at the actor when the monitor was in the low position, while girls looked at the screen most frequently when it was in both the eye level and low positions.

In another study, available eye contact and expressiveness (in face and tone of voice) of the

actors were studied. In an extensive view of the literature, *Argyle (1969)* reports that, with adults, looking at a person is interpreted by the receiver as a friendly approach; a very high level of gazing suggests an attempt to establish a closer or more intimate relationship, while a low level of gazing is interpreted as disinterest. The face, according to *Argyle (1969)*, is the area looked at during social interaction, it signals emotion fairly clearly, and there are innate patterns of facial expression. The importance of facial expression as well as tone is emphasized by *Mehrabian and Ferris (1967)* who have showed that non-verbal cues have more impact than verbal ones during communication. They have derived an equation for the perceived attitude towards the speaker by the listener of a communication: Perceived attitude = .07 verbal + .38 tone + .55 face.

Available eye contact was varied by having the two male actors look directly and continuously into the camera lens (100 per cent), look at a point to the right of the camera lens (0 per cent), and to glance from the camera lens to a point at the right of the lens (some). One male actor spoke with expressiveness in his tone of voice and face, while the second actor kept his facial expression and tone as neutral as possible. Seventy-two children, 18 males and 18 females in each of Kindergarten and Grade Two, each viewed the two actors, under one of the eye-contact conditions. Again, the Stack-the-blocks game was used. The expressive actor was preferred to the neutral actor under the condition of 100 per cent available eye contact, with no differences between actors for the conditions of 0 per cent or some available eye contact (see Figure VI). Apparently, the children interpreted the high level of gazing as an attempt to establish a more intimate relationship as suggested by *Argyle (1969)*. While the children were receptive to the expressive actor, they were not responsive to the neutral actor. The boys tended to perform equally well for the two actors, while the girls performance was superior for the expressive male (see Figure VII). This difference between boys and girls was maintained when the scores for the Kindergarten and Grade Two children were examined separately (see Figure VIII). The performance difference between the boys and girls for the two actors was greater for

the Grade Two children than those in Kindergarten. This indicates that the older girls were even more receptive to the expressive male than the Kindergarten girls. Since the overall performance of boys and girls did not differ, the boys seem to be responding to the fact that the actor is male, while the girls vary their performance as a function of the male actor's expressiveness.

The Grade Two children seem to be more sensitive to the combined effects of expressiveness and available eye contact than the Kindergarten children (see Figure IX). The younger Ss performed very poorly for the neutral actor in the 100 per cent available eye contact but about equally well for the other combinations. The Grade Two children scored similarly for the neutral actor under the three eye contact conditions. However, compared to the 0 per cent eye contact condition, they showed improved performance for the expressive actor when there was some available eye contact and even greater improvement for the expressive actor in the 100 per cent available eye contact condition. Since the older children respond differentially to more of the experimental conditions, they are not only aware of a greater variety of social variables than the younger children but are able to make inferences about such information which affects their responsiveness to particular individuals.

In these studies, the verbal content of the messages presented to the children was identical. Therefore, the observed differences in performance were due to the children's responsiveness to the way the message was presented. Specific stimuli, then, were positive features to which the children were more responsive. That is, the children seemed to *identify* with actors having certain features and were more receptive to their message.

When the effects of violence on television have been studied, it has been primarily in terms of the quantity of violence or the behavioural consequences. Little effort has been directed to investigating the relationship between subsequent behaviour and the way the violence is presented. For example, the Roadrunner cartoon with its frequent violent acts probably has less impact on

an individual's tendency for aggression than a program like *Bonanza*.

The Roadrunner cartoon contains only two characters with the action focused on the coyote. He is a loser who involves himself in a variety of improbable situations. Since the viewer knows the story (the roadrunner will escape while some disaster befalls the coyote), attention is maintained by means of fast action, the complexity of the trap and the suspense of waiting for the consequences to befall the coyote. In *Bonanza*, there are several individuals having characteristics which are likely to produce positive reactions or identification in viewers. Information about the 'bad guy' is limited to his negative qualities, while the 'good people' use morally justifiable reasons for their violent behaviour. Such programs seem to carry the message that violence is an acceptable solution to a problem if you are a good person with high motives.

Not all cartoons are innocuous. Bandura and Walters (1963) found more aggressive imitation of a cartoon character than a live adult model. Cartoons may be easier to identify with because they are representations rather than real and often lack specific features indicating age, sex, et cetera. Symbolization facilitates imitation (*Bandura & Walters, 1963*) and this process has already been started with cartoons. Again, however, the positive or negative characteristics of the cartoon character will determine the degree of identification by the viewer.

Children's reactions to television violence are still not well understood. Identification is the basic process. The individuals that the child experiences via television are inventions or images whose positive or negative characteristics are both selected and limited. However, the children's responsiveness to specific characteristics is determined by his social relationships with other people. It is here that he learns to interpret social information and make inferences. Social values and behaviour imparted by television will have minimal long-term effects on a child unless these are consistent with the values and behaviour experienced in his other social interactions.

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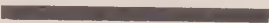
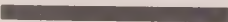

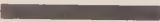










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**Table 1.**

Contents of Commercial Television During Children's  
Viewing Time—4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., Monday, Janu-  
ary 20, 1975, through Friday, January 24, 1975.

• Crime Drama	20.71%	
• Movies	17.5 %	
Situation Comedies	12.68%	
News	12.5 %	
Talk Shows (Interviews)	7.32%	
Game Shows	7.14%	
Children's Programs	3.93%	
Sports	3.93%	
Documentaries	3.04%	
• Dramas	3.04%	
Music	2.86%	
Variety Shows	2.68%	
• Westerns	2.5 %	
• Cartoons	.18%	

• Programs in which crime and violence are portrayed.

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**Table 2.**

Number of Annotations of Crime and Destruction Listed in TV Guide from January 20, 1975 to January 26, 1975, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.

Crime and Destruction	8:00 a.m.– 9:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.– 12:00 noon	12:00– 1:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m.– 4:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.– 11:00 p.m.	Total 8:00 a.m.– 11:00 p.m.
Accidents (personal injury and property damage)	1	3	3	6	52	65
Arson						0
Assault and/or Battery				6	27	33
Bombing					8	8
Embezzlement and/or Extortion			1		18	19
Kidnapping			1		25	26
Murder and/or Suicide	1	1	1	4	63	70
Rape						
Resisting or Interfering with the Law or a Law Enforcement Agent			2	2	48	52
Robbery and/or Theft				1	22	23
Threat (verbal or overt) involving use of a deadly weapon				1	36	37
Total	2	4	8	20	299	333

**Table 3.**

Number of Incidents of Crime and Destruction Viewed from January 19, 1975 to January 26, 1975 (inclusive) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.

Days of Week	8:00 a.m.– 9:00 a.m.		9:00 a.m.– 12:00 noon		12:00– 1:00 p.m.		1:00 p.m.– 4:00 p.m.		4:00 p.m.– 11:00 p.m.		Total 8:00 a.m.– 11:00 p.m.	
	Average per hour		Average per hour		Average per hour		Average per hour		Average per hour		Average per hour	
	Total	hour	Total	hour	Total	hour	Total	hour	Total	hour	Total	hour
Monday	6	6	3	1	0	0	*17	*5.7	74	10.6	100	6.6
Tuesday	2	2	2	.7	0	0	*13	*4.3	53	7.6	70	4.7
Wednesday	0	0	5	1.7	1	.3	5	1.7	41	5.9	52	3.5
Thursday	0	0	5	1.7	0	0	4	1.3	51	7.3	60	4.0
Friday	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	.7	93	13.3	95	6.3
Saturday	*16	*16	*20	*6.7	*5	*5	15	5	*90	*12.9	146	9.7
Sunday, Jan. 19	*6	*6	*29	*9.7	3	3	13	4.3	96	13.7	147	9.8
Sunday, Jan. 26	0	0	*11	*3.7	6	6	19	6.3	39	5.6	75	5.0
Average Number of Incidents per hour for each time slot		3.9		2.6		1.4		3.4		9.6		6.0

\* Cartoons viewed during this time.

**Table 4.**

Number of Incidents of Crime and Destruction Viewed in Cartoons in the Week of Jan. 19, 1975 to Jan. 26, 1975 (inclusive).

Day and Time	Number of Incidents	
	Total	Average per hour
Mon., Jan. 20, 1975 3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.	15	15.0
Tues., Jan. 21, 1975 3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.	13	13.0
Wed., Jan. 22, 1975 10:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m.	7	14.0
Thurs., Jan. 23, 1975 10:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m.	5	10.0
Sat., Jan. 25, 1975 8:00 a.m.-12 noon	50	12.5
Sat., Jan. 25, 1975 5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.	48	48.0
Sun., Jan. 19, 1975 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	31	10.3
Sun., Jan. 26, 1975 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.	11	11.0
Total	180	
Average		11.2

**Table 6.**

Favourite Television Programs as Indicated by Children in Television Questionnaire, November, 1974

Name of Program	No.	%
* <i>Six Million Dollar Man</i>	18	14.63
* <i>Night Stalker</i>	14	11.38
<i>Brady Bunch</i>	13	10.57
Cartoons	13	10.57
* <i>Star Trek</i>	13	10.57
* <i>Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour</i>	11	8.94
<i>Gilligan's Island</i>	9	7.32
Others	9	7.32
<i>Little House on the Prairie</i>	7	5.69
* <i>Adam 12</i>	5	4.07
* <i>Rookies</i>	4	3.25
* <i>Hawaii Five-O</i>	3	2.44
* <i>Ironside</i>	2	1.63
* <i>Police Woman</i>	2	1.63
Total	123	100.01

**Table 5.**

A. Most Frequently Viewed Hours of Television During the Week as Indicated in Television Questionnaire, November, 1974

Hours of Viewing	No.	%
After School (4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.)	20	16.26
After Supper (6:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.)	17	13.82
Both the same	86	69.92
Total	123	100.00

B. Most Popular Viewing Time of Children on Saturdays as Indicated in Television Questionnaire, November, 1974

Time of Day	No.	%
Morning (8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon)	86	69.92
Afternoon (12:00-6:00 p.m.)	28	22.76
Evening (6:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.)	9	7.32
Total	123	100.00

C. Most Popular Viewing Time of Children on Sundays as Indicated in Television Questionnaire, November, 1974

Time of Day	No.	%
Morning (8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon)	39	31.71
Afternoon (12:00-6:00 p.m.)	16	13.01
Evening (6:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.)	68	55.28
Total	123	100.00



**Table 7.**

**A. Most Frequently Viewed Channel on Weekdays as Indicated by Children in Television Questionnaire, November 1974**

Channel	2		2		4		5		7		9		11		29		Total	
	Buffalo		Global		Buffalo		Toronto		Buffalo		Toronto		Hamilton		Buffalo		No.	%
Number of Viewers	4	3.25	13	10.57	9	7.32	3	2.44	28	22.76	5	4.06	2	1.63	59	47.97	123	100.

**B. Most Frequently Viewed Channel on Saturdays as Indicated by Children in Television Questionnaire, November 1974**

Channel	2		Global		4		5		7		9		11		29		Total	
	Buffalo		No.	%	Buffalo		Toronto		Buffalo		Toronto		Hamilton		Buffalo		No.	%
Number of Viewers Morn.	9	7.32	-	-	12	9.76	7	5.70	91	73.98	4	3.25	-	-	-	-	123	100.
Number of Viewers Aft.	3	2.44	2	1.63	4	3.25	98	79.70	5	4.10	5	4.10	2	1.63	4	3.25	123	100.
Number of Viewers Eve.	18	14.63	6	4.88	13	10.57	49	39.84	10	8.13	9	7.32	7	5.70	11	8.94	123	100.

## Summary of Public Participation Studies and Surveys

### Alternatives in Children's Broadcasting Hamilton

This report, titled *Television and our Children*, was undertaken with the financial support of a LIP grant and the sponsorship of Crossroads Telecast, a non-denominational Christian organization involved in television programming for adults and children.

The stated objectives of the project were to determine the influence of televised programming for children in the Hamilton area; monitor children's interest in pro-social programming; measure the concern in the Hamilton area regarding television violence during children's hours; develop methods for evaluating the effectiveness of *Circle Square*, a children's broadcast produced by Crossroads Telecast; stimulate concern and involvement in both The Alternatives to Children's Broadcasting project and to the Royal Commission on Violence; develop a program of making *Circle Square* programs available to local community organizations; prepare support material for *Circle Square* programs; create a pro-social program as a broadcasting alternative for younger children and research and produce additional *Circle Square* programs.

Chapter I of this survey is a review of the literature and bibliography, including Liebert, Halloran, Milgram, et cetera; the second chapter is devoted to a content analysis by six staff members who monitored programming between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. for approximately two weeks (January 12-25, 1976).

Chapter III is titled Survey Methods and Response Statistics and details the experiences the project organizers encountered in finding respondents – children and their parents – to answer a detailed questionnaire on television habits and preferences; the following two chapters detail responses by children and cross-tabulations of results in the children's and adults' questionnaires.

Chapter VII is a one-page qualitative survey of

*Circle Square* and Chapter VIII discusses projects and meetings with the public.

This is followed by a chapter on the film-editing aspect of the project; suggestions for broadcasting alternatives for younger children; the project's conclusions and recommendations, as well as appendices. The report is 225 pages long.

### Halton Board of Education Burlington

This 92-page report, titled *Television's Children*, was prepared by Sandra Birthelmer, project coordinator for the Halton Board. It is a study of students in grades one, four and seven from 24 schools, a proportionate number being drawn from each of the Board's three areas.

Children in grades one and four were individually interviewed for between 15 and 20 minutes; children in Grade Seven completed a questionnaire on a group basis; questionnaires were completed by teachers and parents. The study includes reflections on the various questionnaires as well as the tabulated results; a summary of comments made in response to open-ended questions and a bibliography.

### Rotary Club of Kenora

This two-page report is titled *Survey of Rotary Club of Kenora for Input into the Violence in the Communications Media Royal Commission Hearing, March 18, 1976*. It details the results of questionnaires sent to the 38 Rotarians who responded to the survey of media use, perceptions of media, media impact, violence on television, the impact of television and other media, et cetera.

### St. Lawrence College of Applied Arts and Technology Students in Sociology, Health Sciences Department Cornwall

This is titled *Survey and Brief Presented to the Royal Commission of the Province of Ontario into the Exploitation of Violence in the Communications Industry* and comprises a half-page preamble; the total tally sheet of the survey; high-income tally sheet; middle-income tally sheet; the low-income

tally sheet; a detailed analysis of the results and concludes with two pages of recommendations.

### **Stratford Central Secondary School**

This brief comprises four sections submitted by students of the third, fourth and fifth years of the Stratford Central Secondary School and is a total of 20 pages in length.

The first part of the brief (Brief A) reports on the questionnaire administered to 50 people and includes a survey of violent programs; it concludes with recommendations from the author, Kim Smith, and is followed by a tabulation of the results of the questionnaire.

Brief B by Mary Woods is entitled Violence in Musical Communications and is a one-and-a-half page essay.

Brief C, signed by the French 522 students and Wendy Klein, is the result of research done into Canadian newspapers, magazines and films on the local French channel and concludes that "the Canadian media of French language is no more free of violence than are the English language presentations".

Brief D, signed by David Allman, Anne Moore and Greg Vintar, deals with 350 questionnaires distributed to groups ranging in age from nine to 12. This brief concludes with appendices including the questionnaire used, as well as responses to questions about favourite cartoons, favourite programs, parental restrictions on television viewing, favourite comic books and favourite comic strips.

The final half-page of this survey is given over to recommendations.

### **Board of St. Stephen's Memorial Anglican Church London**

This brief is made up of a six-page letter addressed to the Chairman describing the results of a questionnaire distributed to 45 parishioners, of whom only 5 responded. It is followed by the questionnaire itself, three-and-a-half pages in length, as well as newspaper movie ads and a Time magazine cover showing dead bodies in colour.

### **Laura Secord Secondary School St. Catharines**

This 57-page brief is entitled *Media Violence: Its Effect on our Society* and was prepared by second-year English students at the school. The purpose of this research was to "investigate the amount and type of violence present in current television programming and movie products" and was conducted by 66 Grade Ten English students who were divided into two equal groups: one monitored programs, including commercials, on six channels on Friday, October 3, 1975 and on Saturday, October 4, 1975; the other monitored films being shown during the week of October 3-10, 1975; *Jaws*, *The Way We Were*, *The Master Gun Fighter*, *The Return of the Pink Panther*, *Cinderella* and *It Seemed Like A Good Idea at the Time*. In addition, both groups monitored *The Sting* which was shown at the school on Tuesday, October 7.

Among the items: identity of the aggressor; his or her age; motivation; a description of violent episodes; the immediate outcome and the probable long-term effects. The same items were used in the monitoring of film.

The survey is followed by an analysis of the data; a brief review of related studies and the group's recommendations.

### **Grimsby High School**

This 19-page report comprises eight sections: viewing habits and attitudes of high school students; parental monitoring of television cartoons; monitoring of newspapers and newspaper reading habits and attitudes toward newspapers of both adults and students; television viewing habits and attitudes of youngsters in Grade Five and in Grade Eight; programs watched and games played by children seven to 15 years old; hockey and the media and parental monitoring of television viewing of children at John Knox Private School.

### **North York Board of Education Willowdale**

The first page-and-a-quarter of this brief is made up of a Board resolution and recommendations; there are two research reports, the first titled *The*

*Impact of Violence on Television on Children: A review of Literature* by Patricia Crawford, Catherine Matthews and Patricia Campbell (24 pages including bibliography) and the second titled *Results of a Survey of Pupils and Teachers Regarding Television* by Patricia Crawford and Max Rapoport (42 pages in length plus 16 pages of appendices).

### **EDUCOM Report**

#### **Department of Educational Research & Development**

The brief is entitled *A Survey of Parents Regarding the Effects of Television on Their Children*; the purpose of this research was to find out how parents thought television, particularly violent programming, affected their children. Two hundred questionnaires were distributed of which some 98 were completed and returned; the questionnaire consisted of 21 items, including the following: the amount and frequency of television viewing by the child; parental restrictions on viewing; parental interaction with the child while watching television; parental perceptions of the amount of violence in selected programs; parental opinions of the extent to which television violence contributes to aggressivity in children; behaviour at home which, in the opinion of the parent, can be attributed to television violence; the positive impact of television on children; the negative impact of television on children and changes parents would like to see in television programming. The brief is 21 pages in length.

### **Queen Elizabeth District High School, Sioux Lookout**

This survey, titled *Opinions of Sioux Lookout Residents to Violence in the Media*, is by Man in Society 400 Class, and is made up of a survey of households, a survey of children in grades two and three as well as in grades seven and eight, a newspaper survey and a comparison of adult and children's attitudes to violence. It is 21 pages in length.

### **Kathryn Nicholson, Sioux Lookout**

Ms Nicholson and another elementary school teacher polled all pupils in grades four to eight – a total of 521 children – in four schools. Among other questions, they asked for the name of each youngster's favourite television program and made a "subjective judgment" about whether nine programs were violent, including: *Space 1999*, *Police Story*, *City of Angels*, *Hockey Night in Canada*, *Hawaii Five-O*, *M\*A\*S\*H*, *Monty Python*, *Tarzan*, and *Bugs Bunny*. Ms Nicholson then asked why youngsters who enjoyed such programs liked them; how much television respondents watched daily; how many children there were in each family; whether respondents ever acted out favourite television characters with their friends; whether they thought that what happened in their favourite programs could happen in reality; whether they thought that they had learned anything about real life behaviour from their favourite programs.

She also asked questions about newspaper reading habits and leisure-time activities. The oral presentation of the brief comprises 14-and-a-half pages of transcript and, in addition, there is a selection of questionnaires.

### **Sudbury Business and Professional Women's Club**

The first three-and-a-half pages of this brief are devoted to a discussion of television violence by Dorothy Bradley, former president of the club; this is followed by a submission addressed to the Commissioners from a grade three teacher who surveyed the students in her class; this and the rest of the report are not signed. The next three pages comprise a content analysis of "offensive" programming shown in family viewing hours on March 14, 1976, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., and is followed by a picture from a newspaper of a fight between two hockey players, a pie chart on children's activities and a chart listing the average number of hours of television watched during various time periods of the day.



**David J. Martin, Associate Professor  
Lakehead University, Thunder Bay**

This paper, titled *The Real Effect of Media Violence: An Alternative Analysis*, is a revision of one presented at the 1971 meetings of the American Sociological Association in Denver, Colorado. The paper argues that television violence induces passivity and inaction rather than over-activity and aggressiveness and includes two pages of footnotes, as well as six pages of tables.

### **The Board of Education for the City of London**

This 40-page brief describes an investigation into media violence carried out by the Board's Ad Hoc Committee; the Committee decided to address itself to four major questions: did it believe that television was capable of causing violent behaviour; was there any proof that television was contributing to violence behaviour; if television was found to so contribute, who could do something constructive about the problem; what could they do.

After discussing these four questions, the report lists its bibliography and six appendices: an address by its Chairman; its definition of violence; a summary of selected data on crimes against persons and properties, 1964-74, provided by the London Police Department; an overview of vandalism in London schools, 1971 to 1975; television viewing patterns of London children, aged two to 11, in the weeks from January 12 to February 1, 1976; and a Committee rating of violence in six excerpts from current television programs.

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# Foreign Consultations

Foreign  
Consultations

# Foreign Consultations

## Introduction

Mass communication is a phenomenon of the last hundred years. Whatever the medium, its impact has concerned both public and governments. Such concerns have manifested themselves in North America and have led to the establishment of government enquiries, as well as industry and governmental action. The same concerns have driven the peoples and governments of Europe.

The fruits of agitation and action in the United States quickly become well known in Canada. Information on the European experience is not so accessible. In the course of acquiring its library, and in consultation with its experts, the Commission early identified the need to draw on that experience, to discover whether similar problems had arisen in older cultures, and how those governments and peoples had, through their own institutions, dealt, successfully or otherwise, with common problems.

The need to consult with people in the United States was obvious, but the Commission preferred first to consult with Europeans, to find such commonalities in research, conclusions and remedial action as might exist. The United Kingdom and France, the four Scandinavian nations, Italy, Austria and West Germany, and the smaller countries of Belgium, The Netherlands, and Switzerland have many problems similar to Canada's; it was useful to compare these with two Iron Curtain countries, Poland and Hungary. Snippets of information were available that stirred an interest in comparing mass communications in South Africa, Japan, Israel, Mexico and the countries of the Caribbean and South America, but European models were thought to be more relevant.

Here, then, is a profile of what the Commission learned from 15 other countries regarding their concerns about violence in the communications industry. The profile is largely confined to the areas of principal concern, identified by the public at the Commission's hearings as television, film and the press.

For purposes of comparison, a similar survey of Canadian policies and institutions is included.

The reader will find here problems that may have been thought to be Canada's alone, as well as

techniques for attacking those problems that may prove, in whole or in part, worthy of import.

The Commission wishes to express its thanks to the Federal-Provincial Division of the Canadian Department of External Affairs, and to Ontario House offices in Europe for their assistance in facilitating the work of gathering this material.

## International Agencies

### The United Nations

The United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published an annotated *Bibliography on the Influence of Film on Children and Youth* in 1961. In 1964, it published an annotated *Bibliography on the Effects of Television on Children and Youth*, with a special section on violence. A symposium on the impact of violence in the mass media was held under UNESCO's auspices in Paris, June 29 to July 7, 1970 with participants from 18 countries and 23 non-governmental observers. The summary statement issued by the symposium recommended establishment of facilities for independent mass media research on a long-term basis to study cumulative effects, as well as the role of the media in early stages of human socialization; it urged researchers to communicate their results, particularly to the media.

UNESCO is currently funding a research project on the causes of violence; this consists of eight studies (including one on media violence) from different disciplines.

UNESCO's Division of Applied Social Science at Paris sees a re-orientation in research from the biological and psychological approach to more economic, sociological and political analyses.

UNESCO has published a number of pertinent monographs in addition to the two mentioned above:

*Film Production by International Cooperation*, 1961

*Social Education through Television*, 1963

*Study of the Establishment of National Centres for Cataloguing of Films and Television Programs*, 1963

*Screen Education: Teaching a Critical Approach to Cinema and Television*, 1964

*Television and the Social Education of Women*, 1967

*Mass Media in Society: the Need for Research*, 1970

*Radio and Television in Literacy*, 1971

*The Mass Media in a Violent World*, 1971

*The Practice of Mass Communications: Some*

*Lessons from Research*, 1972

*Cinematographic Institutions*, 1973

*Television Traffic – A One-Way Street*, 1977

UNESCO has made no effort to play a major international role in the exchange among nations of information on the study of media and media violence, except for organizing and funding such studies and publishing them.

Its work in the field appears to be much better known and appreciated among Europeans than among North Americans.

Twenty years ago, an International Centre of Films for Children and Young People was set up by UNESCO in Brussels (since relocated in Paris) to encourage the establishment of national centres; it is concerned with film literacy. It has published a guide to criteria for films for children and youth.

### Council of Europe

The Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France established a European Committee on Crime Problems which, in 1963, surveyed the effectiveness of programs for the prevention of juvenile delinquency among its member countries. In 1967, the Council of Europe published *The Press and the Protection of Youth*, and in 1968 *The Cinema and the Protection of Youth*. The latter makes some reference to television, but it should be remembered that television had just begun its spread across Europe. In 1972, the committee published *The Role of the School in Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency*, and in 1973, *Violence in Society*. The committee's work is being continued at annual conferences of directors of Criminological Research Institutes, whose latest research deals with methods of forecasting trends in criminality, international terrorism, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In 1968 the Council of Europe conducted a symposium on *Human Rights and Mass Communications* at Salzburg. The Committee on Culture and Education hosted a symposium at Florence, in 1973, on *Freedom of Expression and the Role of the Artist in European Society*, and in Munich, in June, 1974, a symposium on *The Role*

*of Management of Telecommunications in a Democratic Society.* This Committee unanimously recommended to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe the adoption of a statement of minimum requirements for national broadcasting, together with an amendment to include encouragement of broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings. The resolution was adopted by the assembly. This 1975 statement of minimum requirements so closely reflects the Commission's own views, independently arrived at, that it is included here:

#### Minimum Requirements for National Broadcasting.

- a. A full service for all the public, with:
  - i) multiple choice of programming with due recognition of regional and minority interests, although not exclusively on any single channel;
  - ii) a high educational and cultural element;
  - iii) control, by properly balanced programming, of cultural, commercial and also information pollution;
  - iv) high content of coordination and exchange with other European broadcasting productions.
- b. Freedom of expression, with no government or institutional preliminary censorship, but subject to the following qualifications:
  - i) the right of reply;
  - ii) the public accountability of producers for their productions before some organization, in the first instance predominantly parliamentary, democratically representative of society;
  - iii) accountability of producers, rather than institutions, before the laws in force in any particular state;
- c. The right of individual access to broadcasting in principle though subject to the existing controls on quality and to the availability of relevant space;
- d. Recognition of viewers' and listeners' associations and proper opportunities for their opinions to be publicly debated;
- e. Instruction at all levels of education, and also via the media themselves, in the understanding of broadcasting (including advertis-

- ing techniques and political propaganda);
- f. Research into both the technological and social aspects of broadcasting;
- g. Flexibility to introduce new techniques (such as viewer-selected super-imposed subtitling);
- h. A special employment policy for those engaged in the media that recognizes their particular responsibility towards ensuring a public service and the obligations this responsibility imposes upon them;
- i. The divorce of commercial interest from program content and planning, though not necessarily the complete exclusion of commercial involvement where this might contribute to the quality of the service provided;
- j. Responsible control of broadcasting, whether directly by government or by the intermediary of licensed institutions.

At the 1974 conference, Robert Wangermée, director-general of *Radiodiffusion—Télévision Belge*, described a cable system:

Proliferation of channels would in itself be enough to transform audiovisual communication radically, because each channel could specialize to meet requirements of particular groups. There could be entertainment channels showing nothing but films; channels for sports fans with matches all the time; cultural channels for lovers of opera, concerts and the theatre; non-stop news channels; service channels; educational channels both for children and for adults; political channels, either pluralist or partisan; and channels with unrestricted public access. The result would be a television of plenty, comparable to the world of the press, where national dailies, regional and local papers, magazines catering for specialized tastes and interests, and ideologically committed organs exist side by side. Television channels could diversify in the same way. They would be financed by advertising or subscriptions, or separately for each broadcast. Their programs would be daily, periodic or occasional. They would appear as and when they were required to satisfy real, economically measurable needs.



Canada has established a consulate in Strasbourg with observer status. It is hoped that, through these offices, Canadians will have increased access to a useful flow of extremely valuable material that represents a distillation of European experience.

### **European Economic Community**

Formation of the European Economic Community (the EEC) has meant that a number of conflicts between national systems must be resolved. One of these is the standardization of government aid to national film industries. It is thought that aid designed to protect national films is contrary to the provisions of the 1957 Treaty of Rome. An industry group, *Le Comité des Industries Cinématographiques des Communautés Européennes* (the Committee of Film Industries of the European Community), Brussels, is grappling with that problem. It is also undertaking a Europe-wide survey of film censorship rules in member countries. The organization has proposed the abolition of all but voluntary film censorship boards, with governments providing content warnings (classification) only. The organization estimates that some 580 feature films are produced annually in Europe, compared with about 250 produced annually in the United States, and estimates that 100 to 150 must be produced each year in Europe to effectively compete with the U.S. product. Concern has also been expressed at the increasing domination by U.S. film-producing and distribution companies, which are moving heavily into ownership of cinemas in Europe. The organization expressed concern at the lack of children's films, for which there is a wide demand. It is feared that, unless a sufficient number are produced, young people will not become movie-goers. There is a new film audience every six years, so that audiences do not become satiated with violent content. Research shows that the average movie-goer is aged 16 to 22; it is clear, as shown by the decibels at which music is played, as well as by its violent harmonies, that adolescent audiences demand strong impact in their popular culture, including films.

There is also a committee considering the effects of international copyright conventions on public lending rights, including print, film and broadcast material.

In addition to these three international groupings, there are others which exchange information by conferences or publications.

### **The International Association for Mass Communication Research**

At the Tenth General Assembly and Scientific Conference of the International Association for Mass Communication Research at the University of Leicester in the U.K., in August 1976, a wide variety of papers was presented. Delegates were present from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany (both DDR and FRG), Greece, Hungary, India, Iran, Northern Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Malaysia, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, the United States, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

The Commission audited the Conference at the University of Leicester.

### **The International Communications Association**

The (ICA) International Communications Association is U.S.-based and oriented, but is now expanding into Europe. It is a professional organization of interdisciplinary scholars committed to the systematic study of communications, the dissemination of research results, and the application of results to the development of human understanding and the public welfare. The ICA publishes *The Journal of Communication* and *Human Communication Research*.

### **The International Press Institute**

The (IPI) International Press Institute, formerly in Zurich and now in London, publishes *Press Codes of Ethics*.

### **Le Prix Jeunesse**

The Prix Jeunesse is an award made every other year at the International Festival of Television Films for Children and Youth, held in Munich. At the festival, current research respecting children's television is discussed, and specialized film techniques are exchanged. The Commission audited the festival in May, 1976.

## Vatican Radio

Vatican Radio broadcasts beyond the Holy See in many languages. In 1971 *Mass Media, the Pastoral Instruction* was published by the Pontifical Commission for Means of Social Communication. It states:

The reporting of violence and brutality demands a special care and tact. There is no denying that human life is debased by violence and savagery and that such things happen in our time and perhaps more now than ever before. It is possible to delineate all this violence and savagery so that men will recoil from it. But if these bloody events are too realistically described or too frequently dwelt upon, there is a danger of perverting the image of human life. It is also possible that such descriptions generate an attitude of mind and, according to many experts, a psychosis, which escapes the control of the very forces that unleashed it. All this may leave violence and savagery as the accepted way of resolving conflict.

It is never too early to start encouraging in children artistic taste, a keen critical faculty and a sense of personal responsibility based on sound morality. They need all these so that they can use discrimination in choosing the publications, films and broadcasts that are set before them. . . .

It is useful for educators to take note of some of the broadcasts, films and publications that most interest the young in their care. They can then discuss them together and this helps to develop the child's critical powers.

As for the more difficult or even controversial artistic productions, here the parent should, at the right moment, help his children to discover the human values in the production and to interpret its details within the context of the work as a whole.

This sort of training must be given a regular place in school curricula. It must be given, and systematically, at every stage of education. In this way, young people can be helped gradually to develop a new perception in their interpretation of what is offered them by the press, and other media and the

literary publishing houses. All this should be taught in study courses planned to include special sessions where the teacher can call on the help of professional communicators for lectures and for practical exercises.

Contact and cooperation among men depend, in the last resort, on man's free choice which, in its turn, is affected by psychological, sociological and technical factors. And so the importance and ultimate significance of the media of communication depends upon the working of man's free choice in their use.

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the patient cooperation, information and advice offered during its consultations by:

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*The International Press Institute*

Peter Galliner

**Chart:  
Elements in Television,  
Film and the Press  
in 16 Countries**

# Television

	Austria	Belgium	Canada			Denmark	Finland	France	Germany		Hungary	Italy	Netherlands	Norway	Poland	Sweden	Switzerland	U.K.			Big 3	USA
			CBC	CTV	TVO				ARD	ZDF								BBC	IBA			
Population (millions)	7½	10	23			5	5	50	62		11	54	13½	4	33	8	7	54			230	
Television Channels	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	3	2	1	3	1	
Colour System (N/P/S)	P	P	N	N	N	P	P	S	P	P	S	P	P	P	S	P	P	P	P	N	N	
Ownership	Government Monopoly	■				■	■	■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
	Public		■		■				■	■								■				■
	Mixed						■						■			■			■			
	Private		■														■					■
Financing	Government Subsidy	■	■		■												■					■
	License Fees	■				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
	Purchase Tax						■	■	■	■				■								
	Advertising	■	■	■			■	■	■	■		■	■				■					■
Control	Direct Government							■			■											
	Parliamentary Committee											■										
	Policy Board	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■		■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	L & V or Advisory Council	■			■									■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■
Guaranteed Freedom of Expression or Independence	Independent Supervision	■	■	■	■							■	■			■	■				■	■
	Constitution	■							■	■		■	■				■				■	■
	Broadcasting Act	■	■	■	■																	
	Statute Media Act	■														■						
Accountability	Tradition		■	■	■													■	■			
	Institution	■	■	■	■		■		■	■		■		■	■			■	■	■	■	■
	Responsible Editor	■					■															
	Research	■						■			■											
Violence	Policy Statement	■	■		■		■		■	■		■										
		■	■		■							■										
Border Spillover		■	■	■	■	■		■				■					■					



## Film

Production	Annual Number		Austria	Belgium	Canada Ontario	Denmark	Finland	France	Germany	Hungary	Italy	Netherlands	Norway	Poland	Sweden	Switzerland	U.K.	USA
	Public Finance	Gov't																
Distribution	Automatic																	
	Selective																	
Exhibition	Private																	
	Publicly Owned																	
Control	Gov't Aid																	
	Privately Owned																	
Exhibition	Publicly Owned																	
	Gov't Aid																	
Control	Privately Owned																	
	Statutory Censorship																	
Exhibition	Statutory Classification																	
	Voluntary Industry																	
Control	Appeal Procedure																	
	Ad hoc, or none																	
Exhibition	Local Authority																	
	Direct Government																	

## The Press

Guaranteed Freedom of Expression	Constitution																	
	Statute	Press Law																
Government Aid	Media Law																	
	Tradition																	
Control	Direct Government																	
	Statutory Press Council																	
Exhibition	Voluntary Press Council																	
	Code of Ethics																	
Accountability	Press Ombudsman																	
	Responsible Editor																	
Control	Right of Reply																	

# Austria

## Television

(ORF)  
Austrian  
Broadcasting  
Corporation  
(1974)

(ORF) *Österreichischer Rundfunk G.m.b.H* (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation) controls all radio and television broadcasting in Austria. There are three radio programs and two television channels, in colour, using the West German PAL (phase alternate line) system.

This autonomous, non-profit body was created in 1974, when the broadcasting system was reorganized. Except for broadcasts to foreign countries, which are financed by parliamentary grant, ORF receives its income from licence fees and from limited commercial advertising. Licence fees are \$68.40 for both black-and-white and colour sets plus an additional *länder* fee. Advertising revenue represents about a third of total revenue.

Radio broadcasting began in Austria in 1924, and regular telecasting in 1957. The broadcasting monopoly has been independent of government for program and revenue since a popularly inspired referendum of 1967 demanded changes. In the major reorganization of 1974, "objectivity and impartiality of reporting, due consideration of a diversity of opinions, consistent balance of the programs, and the independence of the institution, personnel and organs" are constitutionally guaranteed.

Policy Board

ORF is governed by a board of trustees consisting of 30 members. Six of them are appointed by the government, reflecting the political representation in Parliament, one each on the nomination of the *länder* (provincial) governments, one each by the federal Chancellor, the Ministers of Finance, Education and the Transport; six represent the Listeners' and Viewers' Council and five represent ORF's staff. The superintendent-general, a radio superintendent, two television superintendents, nine superintendents on the

Listeners'  
and Viewers'  
Council

provincial level, and a technical and a commercial director are all appointed by the board of trustees, which also sets licence fees.

The 1974 Broadcasting Act introduced a new feature: *Hoerer und Seher Beirat* (Council of Listeners and Viewers) consisting of 35 people representing broadcasting consumers. Organizations and institutions representing labour unions, sports groups, older people, arts and science, rural populations, industry, et cetera, each nominate three persons. From that group, 15 are selected and the Chancellor appoints a further 20 members-at-large, representing other unorganized elements of the public. From this group, one is chosen as chairman for an unpaid term of three years. The present chairman formerly was the president, and is now head of the English department of the University of Vienna. The council's monthly meetings are open to the press. Its four committees on programming, complaints, public opinion and polls, and technical matters meet more often. There is constant feedback between the council's members and the groups nominating them.

The council has recommended extension of services to cover all the population. The council has power to delay a licence fee increase, but except for a right to ask for a general poll of public opinion once a year, the council's recommendations are not binding on the board of trustees. Violence in programming has been discussed by the council, and original research was commissioned in 1972 and published by ORF in 1974.

Independent  
Supervision of  
Mandate

Supervision of the ORF, to ensure it is adhering in balance and objectivity to its mandate under the Broadcasting Act, is carried out by the *Kommission zur Wahrund des Rundfunkgesetzes* (the Commission for the Enforcement of the Radio and Television Act), which is attached to the *Bundeskansleramt* (Chancellor's office). This body consists of 17 persons, nine of whom are judges; the others are law-

yers and parliamentary members, half of whom are nominated by the staff of ORF and half by the Listeners' and Viewers' Council. All complaints on the subject of the Act's political balance are directed here and are investigated. Penalties (not yet required to be applied) are severe.

Radio's three channels reach some 90 per cent of the population. There are two national program channels, carrying "home" and "regional" programs. Only one channel carries advertising, restricted by the Broadcasting Act to 120 minutes a day. Commercials are usually scheduled in spots from 11:30 to 12:30 at noon and again in the evening.

The two television channels reach 85 per cent of the population, but the council has put a high priority on extension of services to all Austrians. Channel 2 broadcasts only four hours a day on each of five weekday evenings and on weekends and it includes regional programming. There are school broadcasts in the morning and repeats of selected evening programs for shift workers.

Television advertisements may not exceed 20 minutes per day and are clustered in four five-minute periods between 7:00 and 9:30 p.m. Advertising for tobacco and alcohol and subliminal advertising are prohibited. Television goes off the air at 9:30 or 10:30 p.m., sometimes later on weekends. (Research shows that 60 per cent of Austrians go to bed at 9:30 p.m.) Some 30 per cent of ORF's programming is imported, usually consisting of programs already dubbed into German for West German audiences. ORF uses 10 films per week, cooperates in purchases of series and films with both ARD and ZDF (West German) television networks and also undertakes co-productions. It telecasts *File on XY-Unsolved* simultaneously with ZDF.

ORF fills an important role in coordinating exchanges of programs, including news, between *Eurovision*, based at Geneva, and *Intervision*, based at Prague.

Border  
Spillover

Research on  
Violence  
(1972-1974)

Impact  
of Television

Film Aid  
Policy

German television (both ARD and ZDF) can be received in western Austria, as can Hungarian and Czechoslovakian television; the latter two, however, require converters because Iron Curtain countries generally employ the French SECAM system.

ORF's research department, which does the usual audience and program research, undertook, upon publication of the U.S. Surgeon General's Report, to investigate the question of violence on television in Austria. It engaged a number of university researchers in various disciplines to undertake studies. After two years, its report was issued in book form in October 1974. The Commission discussed the details of the studies and the results with the editor of the book, a psychologist and television producer, and with one of the published researchers. The editor summed up the conclusions reached by ORF and the reason for commissioning the studies:

This report arose from the staff, which decided to reduce violence in programming. In doing the studies, we wanted to get confirmation that our reduction of violence in programming was the right decision.

If there is a strong predisposition in the viewer, the effect of violence in the programming is greater. There is a direct relationship, which, on a curve, would run parallel, and we bring it back to individual psychological problems and don't see it as a collective problem. Crime in Austria is going up, but very little compared to the United States.

## Film

During the 1950s Austria produced some 20 to 37 films annually. Then came television (1957) and production of films for this nation of seven million people dropped to three to four per year. Between 1960 and 1971, two-thirds of the cinema audiences melted away and a third of the cinemas closed.

There has been a modest program of government aid to the film industry,

including prizes for documentaries, which has helped to bring production up to six to seven films a year, but a long-promised program of film aid has not yet materialized.

Control

Austria's criminal law outlaws pornography. There is no formal film censorship board, although a special committee set up under the Department of Education screened and recommended the banning of Pasolini's *The Last 120 Days of Sodom*. The film was not exhibited in Austria.

Government  
Periodical Aid  
(1972)

More than 400 films are imported each year, mostly dubbed, some with subtitles.

Austrian Film  
Archive

*Österreiches Filmarchiv* (Austrian Film Archive) stores films and mounts retrospectives for film buffs.

Some film co-productions are undertaken with ORF, but the quality is said not to be sufficiently high for cinema exhibition.

Government  
Press Aid  
(1975)

## The Press

Constitutional  
Guarantee  
(1867)

Austria's press history dates back to the publication of its first newspaper in 1605; one newspaper, founded in 1703, is the oldest daily published in the world. Freedom of the press is guaranteed by the Federal Constitution, and originally derives from a Declaration of Citizens' Rights, which formed a part of the 1867 Constitution: "Every person has the right of free expression of opinion in speech, writing, print or visual media within the limits of legal regulations. The press must not be subjected to censorship, nor restricted by rule of the licensing system."

Austrian Press  
Council  
(1961)

At present, there are 31 dailies in Austria; six of those published in Vienna are circulated on a nation-wide basis. Each of the political parties has at least one paper. The provincial press is also strong.

Responsible  
Editor

Newspapers must register a responsible editor, who answers at law for material published that contravenes the law on such points as libel or corruption of minors. Citizens have the right of reply: where there is an error in the press, an aggrieved person may

Right of Reply

demand a formal retraction of equal space and prominence. This law also applies to television.

There is a technique known as "the editorial statute" used at ORF and in newspapers – an agreed-upon internal code between publishers, editors and journalists guaranteeing freedom of reportage.

Legislation passed in 1972 provides government subsidies on a selective basis for the promotion of periodicals that provide political education. A special commission recommends recipients to the government, who then are awarded a basic subsidy and a supplement based on the publication's circulation and price.

Newspapers, imperilled by rising costs of labour, newsprint and distribution, sought new subsidies, which were granted in 1975, by a public program of press assistance. The subsidy is for newspapers selling at least 5,000 copies and is based on the turnover tax.

In 1961, the Austrian Newspaper Publishers' and Editors' Association and the Journalists' Trade Union established a system of voluntary self-control known as the *Österreichischer Presserat* (Austrian Press Council), which adopted a code of ethics. It has no power of enforcement, although it is currently attempting to have member papers agree by contract to publication of decisions. Almost all newspapers and periodicals do, however, respect the judgments handed down, and publish them.

Actions may be taken at law by individuals for such offences as libel or invasion of privacy. The press council does not involve itself in such cases until after trial. If a newspaper refuses an aggrieved person's demand for a reply, the complainant may have the newspaper prosecuted. Members of the press council believe such a right should be restricted to the truth.

The press council investigates complaints of breach of press ethics and, if it finds substance to the complaint, may publish its findings at once or may invite the parties (with legal represent-



ation, if they choose) to a hearing. The press council then disposes of the matter. If it finds there is a breach of the published code of ethics, it publishes its judgment, which the press picks up and disseminates.

The press council is made up of 20 members, eight representatives each of the two founding organizations, two from an organization called Concordia (made up of members of the foreign press) and two from a magazine association. Members serve without pay. The organizations represent print media only. Members of the council are concerned with the lack of training and the general background of young journalists. As a result, the council has set up a three-week course of training, admittedly too short.

Media Law  
(1976)

A reform media law has just been enacted by Parliament. Under this law, journalists are not required to disclose their sources.

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the patient cooperation, information and advice offered during its consultations in Austria by:

(ORF) *Österreichischer Rundfunk G.m.b.H* (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation)

Werner Swossil, B. Schuch, Theo Schäffer, Prof. Korninger

*Österreichischer Presserat* (Austrian Press Council)

Walter Schaffelhofer, Harald Egger

# Belgium

## Television

New  
Constitution  
(1971)

Belgium, a nation of some 10 million, comprises Flemish and Walloons, and each linguistic community has regional powers in cultural and economic affairs, under the rewritten Constitution of 1971. The Flemish are mainly located in the North, and speak Dutch, while the Walloons are mainly in the South, and are French-speaking. As in Canada, broadcasting is carried out in the two official languages, plus some in German for the large German-speaking minority. There is a *Ministère de l'Éducation National et de la Culture Française* (Ministry of National Education and French Culture) and a *Ministerie van Nationale Opvoeding en Nederlandse Cultuur* (Ministry of National Education and Dutch Culture).

Regular radio broadcasting has been carried on in Belgium in French since 1923, and in Dutch since 1928, and there has been regular television transmission since 1953. All services potentially reach all Belgians. Colourcasting uses the PAL system.

The 1960 Broadcasting Act states that broadcasts are to be objective and subject to no form of government censorship. Broadcasts are not permitted that run counter to Belgian law, the general interest or public order or decency, or that may offend foreign heads of states or the personal convictions of listeners. There is an obligation to broadcast all facets of public opinion, as well as a right of reply.

The two Ministers of Culture designate government commissioners, and the Minister of Finance delegates an official, all of whom oversee the broadcasting system and its budget.

A revised Broadcasting Law in under consideration.

The Ministry of Culture is very concerned about the impact of commercial border stations beamed at the Brussels

Border  
Spillover

(RTB/BRT)  
Belgian  
Broadcasting  
Corporation  
(1960)

Policy Board

Right of Reply

Supervision of  
Mandate

Broadcasting  
Policy under  
Review

market and supported by Belgian advertisers. Such stations' schedules are heavy with U.S. programs, including three serials and a daily feature film, plus an extra film on Saturday and Sunday.

Broadcasts from foreign commercial radio stations such as Europe Number One (a privately owned commercial station in Saarbrücken, Germany) and especially Radio Luxembourg are readily receivable, as are television broadcasts from France, The Netherlands, Germany and Luxembourg. Licensed cable systems under private ownership import programs of two Dutch, two French, three German and the Luxembourg services into Belgium.

(RTB/BRT) *Radiodiffusion-Télévision Belge/Belgische Radio en Televisie* (Belgian Broadcasting Corporation) is a public organization established by law in 1960, under the Ministry of Culture. It consists of three autonomous institutes responsible respectively for French-language broadcasts, Flemish broadcasts and the Institute of Common Services; the latter is also responsible for German-language and foreign broadcasting. Financial resources are derived from receiver licence fees and government subsidies. No commercial advertising is permitted on either television or radio. Revenue is mainly from an annual parliamentary subsidy, and is not tied to the receipts of annual licence fees. Current licence fees are \$46.17 for black-and-white and \$71.82 for colour sets.

Each of the two Broadcasting Institutes has a board of directors of 13 members, appointed by Parliament (not government) on recommendation of the Cultural Council of the French- or Dutch-speaking communities. The responsible minister may attend meetings of the board of directors.

Permanent committees set up by each board of directors consist of the chairman and vice chairman, general manager and two program directors (one each for radio and television). These are all appointed by the government of the day, upon the recommen-

dation of the board of directors. The legislation provides for appointment by the minister of such persons as are recommended by the board of directors to an advisory board and several have been set up, for specialized purposes.

These two Broadcasting Institutes are separate and distinct public bodies, each responsible for its own programming (including news) and its own budget.

Apart from the French- and Dutch-language program institutes, there is a third, the Institute of Joint Services. It is in charge of the hardware, has responsibility for German and international broadcasts, and supervises common cultural facilities such as the libraries and the symphony orchestra. This institute is governed by a General Council, comprising the members of the two boards of directors of the Broadcasting Institutes. It also has a permanent committee, made up of the chairman and vice chairman of the two Broadcasting Institutes and their four general managers. This institute is itself managed by two general managers, one in charge of technical services and the other of administration.

There is also a Cultural Board, consisting of the chairman of the General Council and the two general managers of the Broadcasting Institutes. There is also a Coordination Board comprising the chairman of the General Council and the four general managers, coordinating technical, administrative and cultural departments. Since 1971, the Institute of Joint Services has been cut back, in the interest of economy.

Radio broadcasts in French and Dutch go out over three networks. German-language broadcasts are both national, such as news, and regional.

There are two television channels, one in each language to provide everything – information, news, culture. A second television channel for each language has been proposed.

Belgian television broadcasting hours are the shortest in Europe – one and a half to two hours of school broadcasting and two to four hours of

#### Policy on Violence

adult programming per day. Morning broadcasts consist of in-school programs covering a wide range of subjects. These are pre-planned; schedules are circulated well in advance to the schools to assist teachers to utilize the programs. Imported programming accounts for one-third of RTB, and somewhat higher (40 percent) of BRT transmission. BRT suffers most from foreign competition – half the French-language viewers receive Luxembourg and 80 per cent receive all three French channels.

There is a stated policy to avoid violence in the early part of the evening. Where it does occur, the French system of warning, the *carré blanc* (a small white square continuously displayed in the lower left corner) is resorted to. It was reported that the use of the *carré blanc* was significantly higher last year than in previous years.

There is a *Comité de Convenances Morales*, (Commission on Standards of Moral Decency) of four persons under the Cultural Ministry, chaired by a judge and including a university professor and representatives from family associations; it has advised on the criteria for using the *carré blanc*, and has defined “children” and “adolescents” for purposes of scheduling programs. Complaints are also directed to this commission for comment. The likelihood of children being in the audience is taken into consideration when scheduling Sunday afternoon programming; and on the Wednesday half-holiday, two extra hours of programs suitable for children are broadcast. There is, however, no formal written policy regarding violence in programming.

BRT, which also faces foreign competition from the Netherlands, has no specific written rules regarding violence, but does classify programs with respect to suitability for children and has informal instructions and agreements with its producers. Care is taken, particularly on weekends and evenings to 10:00 p.m. The *carré blanc* is not often used on this Dutch-language

channel. Warnings are sometimes used, however, and have been used even in reporting news (for example, photographs of the immolation of priests). At one time the board of directors banned boxing broadcasts. At violent sports matches (football), cameras are diverted from the crowd violence. Under pressure from the print news media, *Batman* was withdrawn from television.

BRT and RTB each have audience and program research departments and also commission outside research.

The Commission consulted Jacques-Philippe Leyens, who has been working in the field since the late 1960s; social research is carried out at *Centre de Psychologie Expérimentale et Sociale* (the University of Louvain's Institute for Psychological Experimentation) in association with the University of Liège. Professor Leyens undertakes research for both RTB and BRT. His approach is called "decentration" and indicates that courses on understanding media, such as are now offered in Belgian Catholic secondary schools, will be helpful in developing a critical perspective on media content. Professor Leyens has other research listed in the Bibliography, or which is forthcoming.

## Film

Belgian film aid, consisting of cash advances and tax rebates, has been provided since 1965, from a percentage of entertainment taxes collected from cinema admissions. It has been offered on a selective basis in the form of production advances for film projects, the scripts of which have been examined by a committee of film critics appointed for two-year terms to advise the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Although there is no censorship as such in Belgium, the tax rebates were denied by the Ministry of Finance to films classified as "immoral" or too controversial.

New Film  
Policy  
(1976)

Impact of  
Television

Violence  
Research

Constitutional  
Guarantee  
(1971)

In 1976 the (French) Minister of Culture announced a new plan for film aid to be administered directly from his department, a plan that has come under heavy attack from the Belgian film industry. The (French) Ministry becomes co-producer of all films that receive state aid. The Minister's advisory committee, supplemented by a professional film producer, will process all applications (which need not originate with a producer) in order to have the Minister's decision available in 60 days. The Minister of Culture on the Dutch side is to continue the more conventional aid of production advances and tax rebates.

Belgian film production has never been very high, and in its worst years has been kept alive only by foreign co-production, but this new plan is intended eventually to encourage annual production of 20 to 25 films in French per year, beginning with six to be co-produced by the Ministry 1977. In the 10-year period prior to this policy, cinema attendance dropped from 80 million to around 31 and a half million, and the number of commercial cinemas was halved. About 360 feature films are imported each year, and it is only in the past three years that Belgians have shown interest in seeing their own films. Recently, attendance has risen slightly, and, as in other countries, audiences are significantly younger than previously.

A book published in Brussels in 1974, *Social Communication and War*, contains research on film and violence by Jacques-Philippe Leyens, Theresa Cisneros of the University of Paraíba and Jeffrey Fisher of Purdue University.

## The Press

Under the Belgian constitution, "the press is free; no form of censorship may ever be instituted; no cautionary deposit may be demanded from writer, publisher or printer. When the author is known and is resident in Belgium,

Research on  
Violence

Film Aid  
(1965)

Control



Press Law (1830)	the publisher, printer or distributor may not be prosecuted.” There is a press law (1830), a decree of 1831, setting out procedures in case of its violation, and further decrees of 1831 and 1847 respecting violation of the laws governing the press. As of 1961, there is a right of reply to aggrieved persons.
Right of Reply (1961)	There are 45 dailies, of which 28 are in French, 16 in Dutch and one in German. There are few official political organs, but newspapers without political colour are rare.
Voluntary Press Council	The AGPB (General Association of Belgian Press) has established a Council of Ethics, composed of three representatives of the National Bureau of the AGPB, three delegates of the Institute of Journalists, and three former members of its Council of Discipline and Arbitration.

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the patient cooperation, information and advice offered during its consultations in Belgium by:

*Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Culture Française* (Belgian Ministry of National Education and French Culture)

A. Mignolet

(BRT) *Belgische Radio en Televisie* (Belgian Broadcasting Corporation – Dutch)

M. van Hellen, M. van Avermaet, H. Santy,  
J. Coolsaet, H. Verboven

(RTB) *Radiodiffusion – Télévision Belge* (Belgian Broadcasting Corporation – French)

M. Massinger, Michèle Legros

*Centre de Psychologie Expérimental et Social* (Institute for Psychological Experimentation)

Jacques-Philippe Leyens, Jeannette Herman

# Denmark

## Television

(*Danmarks  
Radio*)  
Danish  
Broadcasting  
Corporation

Radio and television broadcasting in Denmark is carried out by *Danmarks Radio*, a public corporation, as a monopoly. It is wholly financed by annual licence fees for receiver sets, and carries no commercial advertising. Television comprises only one channel of very limited service. *Danmarks Radio* began regular television service in 1954. The programming day begins with children's broadcasts. General programming starts at 6 or 7 p.m., and is on air till 10:30 p.m. every day, as well as Saturday and Sunday afternoons. It broadcasts some colour, and utilizes the PAL system. It produces some of its own programs, including educational broadcasts, but purchases 52 per cent of its programming from abroad. These imports are subtitled, not dubbed. Only children's programs are dubbed. Only 10-year-old Danish films may be telecast.

Border  
Spillover

Foreign television can be seen in half of Denmark, emanating from Sweden and Germany, and it is heavily watched, since many Danes know these languages.

Policy Board

*Danmarks Radio* is governed by a board of 19 members, 10 of whom are appointed by the government to represent listeners and viewers, the other nine being nominated by various organizations. The board is independent and sets its own licence fees, but must have *Folketing* (Parliament) approval to increase them. Current licence fees are \$70.11 for black-and-white and \$116.28 for colour sets. The board meets once a month on programming matters and once a month on policy and administrative matters.

Violence  
Research and  
Policy

There is no mention of violence in the broadcasting law and there is no written policy against violence. Complaints to the board are overwhelmingly concerned with sex and political balance, but the corporation is very sensitive to violence. It has a distin-

guished research section and a unique arrangement whereby researchers work with producers and their audiences, to sensitize producers to the impact of their work on viewers, and to help viewers understand the medium.

The programs made by *Danmarks Radio* are quite serious and conservative as the broadcasting tradition in Denmark is toward information programs. The corporation innovated a sound track that can be stripped and dubbed in another language. This is widely used in program exchange by *Nordvision* between Scandinavian countries, and now by *Eurovision*. Considerable research has been done and continues to be done, especially for children's programs, which have moved away from bright and sunny programs to those dealing with actual situations in which children find themselves.

*Danmarks Radio* employs researcher Olga Linné, who formerly worked at *Sveriges Radio*, in Sweden, where a number of her studies have been published. She gave this capsule review of the discussions about violence in Scandinavia:

In Scandinavia, the debate about violence was hot. It was started by journalists and other professional debaters in 1965 and 1966, and not by researchers. At the end of the sixties it was urged that Sweden do something about violence and I carried on my study.

When the [U.S.] Surgeon General's Report came out, there was a change. You could criticize individual studies, but you could not escape the fact that rather conservative researchers said that there were some long-term effects on some children. After that, the debate just died.

Disney films are considered too violent to be shown on *Danmarks Radio*.

There are three domestic radio programs and regional programming. The Voice of Denmark broadcasts abroad in several languages.

The Royal Library in Denmark is

the archive for print publications, newspapers, periodicals and books, all of which are kept as cultural and social records open to future researchers.

*Det Dansk Filmuseum* (the Danish Film Library) maintains film archives for the same purposes.

What appears on television, however, is kept as an air check (as in Canada, for CRTC purposes) for a period of only 30 days and is then destroyed. The government's *Socialforskningsinstituttet* (Social Science and Research Council) has set up a study under its chairman, Mogens Koktvgard to report on the creation and financing of a broadcasting archive. Its problems are accentuated by the fact that Denmark adheres to the Berne Convention on Copyright, which permits storage only of broadcasts of special significance. (The U.K. is said to store considerably more extensive broadcasting material.) If future mass communication research into broadcasting is to have material to work with, sufficient also to reconstruct the social elements of the time, some memory storage must be agreed upon. That means it is necessary to find a means of selection and a means of handling copyright. (The current European trend is to write library lending rights to authors into new copyright legislation, which, of course, means that authors may also refuse these rights.) What is needed is a place of storage with access for researchers and provision for financing of the system.

The report of *Statministeriets Udvalg Veelrørende Bevarelse af Radio-Og TV Udsendelser* (the Committee for the Preservation of Broadcasting) was in the hands of the government at this writing, but had not yet been made available in English.

The government-financed Danish Social Science and Research Council and *Det Dansk Forskningsrad for Humaniosa* (the Danish Research Council for the Humanities) fund an Institute, *Den Danske Nationalkomite for Masskommunikation* (the Danish National Committee for Mass Com-

munication), where research is carried out, liaison is maintained between domestic and foreign researchers and publications are issued. There also exists in Aarhus, as part of the Danish *Højskolen* (School of Journalism), a research capability (formerly *Media-Forsk*).

## Film

Denmark has a long history of film production, dating back to 1905. During the period of silent films, Denmark was a major supplier to world markets, but the coming of sound put an end to that – Danish is not spoken much outside of Denmark. Some films continued to be made in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, but, after the introduction of television in Denmark, Germany and Sweden, annual cinema attendances halved in just over a decade and the number of cinemas dropped by 100 in this densely populated nation of five million.

In 1964, the government replaced the entertainment tax with a levy of 15 per cent on cinema ticket prices. This revenue, together with funds raised by a licence tax on cinemas was given to a new body, the Danish Film Foundation, for the support of Danish film production and the art of the cinema. Most films made in Denmark over the past decade have enjoyed some sort of state subsidy.

In 1972, a new film law was passed and a new film aid policy adopted. *Den Dansk Filmskole* (the Danish Film Institute), successor to the Foundation, is governed by an independent board of 30 persons, nominated by film organizations and appointed by the government. There is an executive committee of five persons – the chairman, who is appointed by the Minister of Cultural Affairs (the present incumbent being a judge), two persons nominated by film producers, and two nominated by the board. The board's main function is to handle finances used for operation of a film school and a film studio with excellent production facilities.

Impact of  
Television

Film Aid  
Policy  
(1972)

The Committee  
on the Preservation  
of  
Broadcasts  
(1976-1977)

ties. Grants and loan guarantees are available for modernizing theatres, script-writing and research, promotion, pre-production and production costs, subtitling of Danish films for foreign festivals and dubbing imported children's films. Production grants may go up to 70 per cent of costs. There is a fund to cover losses on quality films. Aid can be given a distributor to import and subtitle quality films. (It was under this provision that *Les Ordres* was imported from Canada and well received by Danish audiences.) The Film Institute employs film consultants on two-year contracts – including one for children's films – who give advice to the board on the artistic merit of a film and recommend the aid to be given, which advice the board usually accepts. For advice on children's films, there is a Children's Film Committee of seven members plus the consultant. They work with imported children's films and recommend aid for dubbing and distribution. This is a selective policy of aid and it sometimes comes under public criticism. Since 1972, one-third of films assisted have paid back their money, one-third have been "total flops" and one-third have been somewhere in between. There are now 15 to 16 films being made annually in Denmark and about seven of these are serious films made with aid from the Film Institute.

Under the 1972 law, these funds no longer derive from a licence fee on cinemas, and there is no longer a specialized tax on film tickets. There is, of course, a value-added tax on admissions as on other goods and services. The institute is now funded entirely by parliamentary subsidy.

There is also a fairly healthy private film industry that does not rely on the Film Institute's financial aid. One studio, *Danske Films*, was opened in 1906, and is the world's oldest continuously operating film company. It produces two or three films a year, mainly for domestic consumption, but also for export, main markets being Eastern European countries such as East Ger-

many, Poland and Yugoslavia. *Danske Films* has made at least one porno film; it makes television commercials (including some seen in Canada for Carlsberg beer) but not for Denmark, film trailers, filmed commercials shown in theatres and an 80-part series for *Danmarks Radio*. There are dubbing facilities and *Danske Films* is part owner of the only subtitling facility in Denmark. It exports its own films, plus some of those produced with Film Institute aid. The company operates its own domestic distribution system and owns a couple of theatres, including the Palace in Copenhagen, which has 1,500 seats. Films are not shown continuously in Danish theatres, but are run at set times about four times a day and one buys a seat to a performance, as in a legitimate theatre. This company produces *The Olsen Gang* comedies (about a sort of "Lavender Hill Mob"), which are extremely popular and financially successful. Popular Danish actors work in television, theatre and film and some 20 to 50 actors have become nationally known "stars".

Recently, a book publisher purchased a film enterprise that included a production company, cinema chain and distribution network. He introduced new methods of publicizing his films: street posters, posters on buses and trains, letters to his book club members. His first film was based on a book he published, but he did not release the book until after the film was released. This is a startlingly new kind of promotion for Denmark.

One of the foremost of the world's film archives and libraries is *Store Sønder voldstraede* (Danish Film Museum), which also shows non-commercial films. It is financed by government grants from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

There are also some 80 film clubs spread around the country, providing alternatives to commercial cinemas and private art houses, under the parent organization, *Sammenslutningen af Danske Filmklubber*. These clubs arrange showings at local theatres on



off-times – Saturday afternoons or Sunday mornings.

From 1913 until 1969, there was a film censorship board, which was required to reject films “deemed likely to offend public decency, or to have a brutalizing effect, or in any other way to be morally subversive.” Until 1967, it was also a punishable offence in Denmark to publish or distribute “obscene” writings, pictures or objects, including film, but a series of unsuccessful prosecutions in the liberalized climate of the 1950s and 1960s led to a study by the Danish Criminal Law Council and the subsequent abolition of criminal code provisions again pornography. It was ultimately concluded that it was inconsistent to free up written material while continuing to censor films, and a film censorship committee was set up to look into the matter. This committee of nine members, chaired by Professor Thomas Sigsgaard, was appointed by the Minister of Justice in 1963. In its studies, it cooperated closely with the Swedish film censorship committee set up in 1964, and took cognizance of the research undertaken by the Swedish Film Institute. It also surveyed important foreign systems of censorship and research prepared for the Council of Europe on crime problems. The committee reported in 1967 that it found “no sufficiently weighty reasons for maintaining the power of any state authority to ban films from showing to adults.” It was, however, recommended that provision for classifying films to be shown to children should be maintained, upon the ground that “there is reason to believe that in certain circumstances, films may have a harmful impact upon the minds of children,” and that “although, on the strength of the existing evidence, there is no basis for assuming that juvenile delinquency can be directly traced to film viewing, the committee will not exclude the possibility that the generally brutalizing effect of excessive film attendance, combined with other factors, may have a certain significance in

Children’s Film  
Classification  
(1969)

Appeal

Research on  
Violence

relation to criminality.” The existing system, in effect from 1960, of a two-level classification, at ages 12 and 16, was maintained, although it was suggested to the Commission that age 18, which is the Danish age of majority, would have been preferred.

The present two classifiers (a child psychologist and a teacher), appointed to four-year terms, see 200 to 300 films annually. Those that a distributor intends to be shown only to patrons over 16 are not submitted. There is a right of appeal for aggrieved distributors to a special board of five: a legal expert, an educator, a psychologist, a youth worker and a film club member. This board’s decision is final.

The bases for classification are excessive sex and violence, racism or anything that is likely to be harmful to children. The classifiers look at features, documentaries, shorts and trailers but not at posters or newspaper advertisements, or films for television. Occasionally, *Danmarks Radio* has run films prohibited to those under 12, but this is rare and such films usually were broadcast late in the viewing schedule. Admission to theatres is supervised by police, upon complaint. It is obvious that this system is less than perfect, since the classifiers are aware that even six-year-olds may be seeing films classified for 12 or over, and 12-year-olds may be seeing films classified for 16 and over.

The Commission found no current research being done in Denmark on the question of violence. Work done elsewhere in the world is familiar, however, to the Danes. Main thrusts of international research are familiar to those who earlier researched pornography for the Danish Criminal Law Council. These professionals differentiate the impact of pornography and violence and have concluded that the effects of television and film violence may be harmful, but the effects of pornography are not. It was also pointed out that there is a difference in cultural tradition between Scandinavia and the

United States. There have always been more objections to severe violence in Europe. Guns are difficult to come by. Denmark has one of the lowest murder rates in the world, about 25 per year. The suicide rate in this nation of five million is about the same as that of the United States. The crime rate went up in the 1960s, levelled off around 1973 and is now on the decline.

A distinguished Danish criminologist consulted by the Commission sees no indication of desensitization in public attitudes toward crime and the law; he cites in support research by sociologist-psychologist L. L. Thurstone, done in 1927 and replicated in 1967 by C. H. Coombs. This research focused on public attitudes to violent crimes, sexual crimes and offences against property. Over that 40-year period, the public was more concerned over violent offences than over sexual offences. He hypothesizes that because life was actually more violent 100, even 40 years ago, than now, the public now has less tolerance of violence. It is also his view that entertainment violence, preferred by audiences, is likely to be far more dangerous than news, or real violence, which is abhorrent to most.

## The Press

Denmark has a large number of daily newspapers with a readership rate among the highest in the world. Most of the important newspapers depend on financial support from organizations or from non-newspaper activities. The financial press exercises considerable influence on political affairs. Almost all newspaper distribution is handled by a cooperative owned and controlled by some of the leading Copenhagen newspapers. Cartoons are a notable feature of Danish papers. The largest Copenhagen newspaper was founded in 1749, and has a Sunday edition, as do four others.

*Dansk Journalistforbund* is a statutory press council, created under the Press Act, which looks into complaints of criminal matters only. Its powers are

limited to requesting retractions, and it may not levy fines. Its three members are a representative of each of the editors' and publishers' associations, and a Supreme Court judge as chairman. Journalists do not participate.

There is also a newspaper specializing in financial affairs (*Borsen*), which has a private ombudsman to whom complaints can be made. This office has been in existence for some two years and, although well publicized, is not much used. This ombudsman has the power to make enquiries, following complaints from companies only, and to require retraction. It is thought that aggrieved companies may be constrained because the ombudsman's enquiry would necessarily extend to investigation of the company's affairs.

*Borsen*  
Ombudsman  
(1974)

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*Kriminalistisk Institut* (Institute of Criminal Studies)  
Berl Kutchinsky

Press Act

Danish Press  
Council  
(1964)

# Finland

## Television

(YLE)  
Finnish  
Broadcasting  
Corporation  
(1964)

Finnish television is state-controlled. It broadcasts to its five million population in the two official languages, Finnish and Swedish, through (YLE) *Oy Yleisradio AB* (Finnish Broadcasting Corporation).

The broadcasting legislation of 1934 envisions more than one licensee for radio and television; in the 1920s there was private radio, and there was private television in the period between 1957 and 1964. In practice, since that date, the state licenses YLE as a monopoly to provide both radio and television. *Oy Yleisradio AB* is a joint stock company where, in theory, anyone may buy shares. In fact, the state owns some 92 per cent, and broadcasting is under close political control.

*Valtioneuvosto* (the Council of State or Cabinet) enters into an agreement with YLE, granting it the exclusive right to broadcast with the assistance of (MAINOS-TV) *Oy Mainos-TV-Recklam AB* (Recklam Commercial TV Ltd.) in making programs. The current licence is for five years, expiring at the end of 1980, upon conditions including the right of a representative of *Kukulaistos Ministeri* (the Minister of Communications) to attend and speak at both administrative council and board of directors' meetings. The programs provided must be "dignified", relevant and impartial in terms of content and presentation and must also contain suitable entertainment. Efforts must be made in programming to promote public education and to provide useful information and news. Care must also be taken not to infringe on anyone's rights. The corporation is obliged to carry government announcements and to supervise the work of MAINOS-TV, which has the right to use YLE's equipment. The two companies are jointly responsible for the content of programs.

Each program must have a designated responsible editor, who may be

Right of Reply

fined, imprisoned, or required to pay compensation for transmission of a program that violates the law. A written policy requires that errors be corrected promptly so as to reach the greatest number of those who received the inaccurate information.

The licence agreement with the state provides that "business" and other comparable advertising cannot be transmitted by YLE, except by television, so that radio, both regional and national, is free of commercials. Revenue for both television and radio is derived from the proceeds of licence fees (\$42.75 for black-and-white and \$78.66 for colour sets), supplemented, for about 40 per cent of total revenue, by advertising. (There are inspectors who spot-check homes to ensure that licences have been purchased.)

MAINOS-TV

YLE does not, however, itself sell advertising or produce programming in periods when advertising is permitted. That is the province of MAINOS-TV, and the subject of an agreement approved by the government. The agreement between MAINOS-TV and YLE requires YLE to rent broadcasting time to MAINOS-TV for transmissions. MAINOS-TV is required to advise YLE in advance of its proposed schedule, and to permit advance screening of its programs whenever possible. Advertising of alcohol and tobacco is not permitted. Presentation of programs involving political parties is prohibited. Children are not to be used in commercials. There must be clear distinction between commercials and programs. Advertising may be no more than 15 per cent of monthly time rented. Commercials appear before and after programs, and interruptions are allowed once in a 20-minute program, twice in a 35-minute program, three times in 50 minutes and four times in 70 minutes. MAINOS-TV may not raid YLE's talent. YLE buys roughly a third of its programming and produces roughly a third, and MAINOS-TV produces or buys the last third.

The Finnish Broadcasting Corporation operates two television channels.

Responsible  
Editor

TV1 at Helsinki and TV2 at Tampere. Broadcasts are in two languages (10 per cent is in Swedish) and with some colour. Finnish television use the PAL system. YLE also operates two country-wide Finnish-language radio networks and a third regional Swedish-language network.

The Minister of Communications appoints YLE's Administrative Council upon the nomination of *Aduskunta* (Parliament) for four-year terms. Its members are for the most part members of Parliament, proportionately representative of party distribution in Parliament. In 1968, the council issued a policy directive prohibiting the showing of programs with excessive violence. The council is responsible for programming, which it has delegated to three programming councils (for radio, for television, and for Swedish radio and television) of 13 members each, representing the public and responsible for response to public complaints.

YLE's board of directors is named by the administrative council, and appears to be actually a board of management. The board members are named for five-year terms and include the director-general, the directors of finance, engineering, and administration and six program directors for Swedish radio and television, news and education and foreign programs, regional radio and television, TV1, TV-2, and two directors for radio, who both have, as of 1974, responsibilities for both channels. All program directors work in coordination with MAINOS-TV.

YLE's main newscast is broadcast from 9:00 to 9:20 p.m. and the same news is shown at the same time on both television channels. The news is produced by TV1. There are five producing units for news and education on two channels. The broadcast day begins at 5:30 p.m. on TV1 and at 6:15 p.m. on TV2. Both begin with children's programming. During the day, educational programs are transmitted, recorded and stored for use at government audiovisual centres in the

regions. In the summer of 1976, an in-house committee prepared recommendations to its board of directors and then to the administrative council, setting out working rules for broadcasting, subsequently adopted by the council as regulations.

The Commission was advised that the regulations regarding violent content are very strict. They were paraphrased as follows: Violence should not generally be shown. It should be restricted. It should not be shown as good or gratuitous. Documentary violence may be shown as real life, but, if shown, it must be necessary, must illustrate important things and contain new information. Fictional and documentary violence must be differentiated. Entertaining fictional violence is not allowed, except as an intrinsic part of a work of artistic merit. If any violent content is shown, it must be accompanied by a warning and may only appear after the late news at 9:30 p.m.

TV1 provides almost complete coverage of Finland. TV2 has gone from 65 per cent to 85 per cent coverage in five years. TV1 employs a repertory company of 15 permanent theatre actors, while TV2 employs freelance actors. There is a wide range of programming, and an attempt to balance the two channels. YLE participates in co-productions.

The Swedish unit programs the whole of Monday on TV2 and late Tuesday on TV1. Program material is 30 per cent foreign, including some films and series, mainly purchased from the U.K., but material from Iron Curtain sources is also included.

Westerns are rarely used, nor are boxing programs. About 250 films are shown annually, three years after cinema exhibition. There have apparently been widely published reports of replication of incidents from earlier television fare (*Batman*, *High Chaparral*, Disney cartoons) and of playground violence. Concern over cartoons has led to a public discussion that has generated considerable parliamentary



debate since television was introduced to Finland.

Broadcasting policy has been debated hotly over the past decade. Several parliamentary inquiries have been held, but there is no consensus on the future course of Finnish broadcasting. The government sets the licence fees and is reluctant to raise them, as Scandinavian fees are already among the highest in the world. It appears unlikely that more broadcasting time will be made available to MAINOS-TV for more advertising revenue because of pressure from newspapers who allege that it erodes their financial base. The only other means of raising revenue is from an increased parliamentary subsidy.

#### Research

YLE has a research department, now mainly engaged in demographic and other audience research. Two of its researchers (M. Stark and S. Minkkinen) have published *Children and the Mass Media*, a textbook for teachers. The latter author is now involved in a research project for UNESCO on teaching the understanding of mass media, not as a separate subject but as a part of media literacy courses in language, history and art.

Research is also conducted at *Tampereen Yliopisto* (the University of Tampere), in its psychology department. Professor Weckwroth has done studies of arousal by movie violence and studies on pornography. He does not follow the trend toward accepting a great influence of the mass media on human behaviour. A colleague, Kaarle Nordenstreng, of the department of communications, has written of the individual and mass media in a democracy, and Tapio Varis, a researcher at the University's *Yhteiskuntatieteiden Tietekunta* (Institute of Journalism and Mass Communication) prepared for UNESCO a 50-country survey of the composition of television programs, program schedules, sources of programs and the conduits through which international program transactions are conducted. Some of his findings are:

- In international television program

production, the United States led markets in the mid-1960s by exporting more than twice as many programs as all other countries combined.

- Most programs in international circulation were originally made to satisfy the tastes of audiences in the countries where they were produced and first marketed.
- Because the production of television programs is expensive, television stations in most countries of the world are heavily dependent on imported material (the average of imports is one-half or less, but some countries import more than two-thirds of their programming).

There are 12 cable companies in existence in Finland, only one of which is operating – and it is a closed-circuit system. Cable has been extensively studied by a parliamentary committee, which rejected its introduction into Finland.

## Film

Finnish film production once averaged about 12 features a year and in past peak years has risen to between 20 and 25, but has dropped as low as six (1973-74) and three (1974-75) per year. The once-widespread production of educational films has ceased since school television programs began in the 1960s, but some children's films are now made, especially animated ones. Annual attendance in cinemas has decreased from 28 million in 1960, by two-thirds. In 1956 there were 624 cinemas; in 1976 only 320 survived. During the decade of the 1960s, some 300 feature films were circulated annually, of which 96 per cent were foreign.

With the impact of television upon film so pronounced, the government in 1969 set up the *Suomen Elokuva Säätiö* (the Finnish Film Foundation) under the Ministry of Education, to assist the industry by giving subsidies and loans: to assist modernization of cinemas (25 per cent), for domestic film production including children's films (43 per cent),

Impact of  
Television

Film Aid  
Policy  
(1969)

to assist the import of foreign films of high artistic value (10 per cent), to organize Finland's participation at international film festivals (5 per cent) and to assist in research, et cetera (17 per cent). The foundation is financed by a special tax of 4 per cent on cinema box-office receipts, supplemented by parliamentary subsidy. Latest available figures revealed that 2.2 million F Marks were produced from the box-office levy and 1.3 million from Parliament. Of this, about two-thirds goes to production and one-third as prize money for quality productions. It is anticipated that aid will rise to six million F Marks annually.

Film aid may be given for script development, but the subject must be of high level and include neither pornography nor violence. There are no written criteria for this selective aid, and there has been considerable public discussion about the policy. Production aid takes the form of loans at 5 per cent interest, which is converted to a subsidy if the film does not make money. Only one film has, to date, repaid its loan. The Film Foundation makes no films of its own. It does give aid to co-productions between television (mainly MAINOS-TV) and filmmakers. One of the greatest problems is that Finland's largest film producer sold 240 old black-and-white films to YLE in one deal; these are now played over and over on television, inhibiting demand for new production.

There are two big chains of cinemas; the others are individually owned.

The Film Foundation's mandate ran out at the end of 1976, having originally been established for a five-year probationary period in 1970, then extended for two years.

A parliamentary committee studied new policy of film aid for four and a half years and produced three large volumes in 1975 for the Ministry of Culture. Its recommendations were not followed, because they were thought to be too expensive to implement.

At the time of the Commission's visit, a committee of nine members (five

representing political parties) was considering future policy for film aid.

The Commission was advised that the current committee was leaning toward a plan for co-productions where one-third of the budget would be put up by the producer, one-third by the foundation and one-third by television. The committee also intended to recommend a larger board of 11 to 13 members, with seven political party representatives and the balance made up of representatives of the film industry, including producers, distributors, exhibitors, directors and the Film Foundation.

In December, 1976, the Finnish Film Foundation was given a new mandate and a fund of 10,000 F Marks.

Under the new legislation, the Council of State names the chairman, vice-chairman and from nine to 11 members for two-year terms. They comprise the foundation's administrative board. These members represent different social viewpoints, regional and linguistic factors and film people; committees of experts are called upon as required. The foundation distributes film aid as grants and loans with reduced interest rates to producers, assistance to promote exports and international festivals, assistance to film exhibitors, subsidies for film import and exhibition, especially of children's films; subsidies for research and promotion and aid for production facilities.

As far back as 1919, Finland set up a system of voluntary censorship of films. In 1946, compulsory state-regulated censorship was imposed. The current Act of 1966, as amended, requires all films intended for public exhibition to be passed by the *Valtion Elokuvatarkastamo* (the State Film Censorship Board). There are now eight members of the board, including a permanent chairman and a vice-chairman appointed for three years by the Minister of Education, who, along with the Minister of Finance, is represented by a nominee; the other members are educators, sociologists, psychologists and film experts. Since 1966,

New Film Aid  
Policy (1976)

Film Censor-  
ship Board  
(1966)

films for television are no longer screened, but there is a gentleman's agreement that films will only be telecast as passed by the censorship board. The board screens films on a daily basis. If a film is to be cut or banned, three members must be present, including the chairman. Films are classified by five age limits: for general audiences; restricted to those over 18; to those over 16; to those over 12; and those over eight. Since the 1960s the proportion of films passed for those under 18 has declined. The Act sets out general guidelines: censors may not authorize morally subversive films, brutalizing films, those that will adversely affect mental health or that might disturb public order, those contrary to Finnish law – such as films containing blasphemy – or those that might adversely affect the defence of the country. The film censors seemed well informed on current research on the effects of violence. The board will not permit glorification of violence or drug-using, but is careful in cutting films considered to have artistic merit. Pornography is against the law in Finland, although there was a committee that studied it in the early 1970s and recommended that it be permitted for exhibition only in black and white, shorn of elaborate advertising. The committee's recommendations were not followed, perhaps because Finland adheres to a 1920 international agreement against the spread of pornography, and that adherence was renewed in 1945.

There is a second system of classification applied by Finnish film censors, which relates to rates of tax. Films classed as scientific or educational, and films for children are exempt from tax. Entertainment films are taxed at 10 per cent, but films considered devoid of all artistic merit are taxed at 30 per cent.

Appeals may be made against the censor's rulings, either as to audience classification or as to rate of tax to the State Film Board. Its 11 members are appointed by the government to three-year terms. Its members represent the

Ministries of Education, Justice and Finance, the press, the film industry, the writers' association and education authorities; the board may summon expert consultants. These two boards generally are in agreement. A further appeal may be taken to the Supreme Administrative Court.

*A Clockwork Orange*, *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Taxi Driver* were passed uncut, as films of serious intent. Pasolini's *The Last 120 Days of Sodom* was banned, as were a total of 41 features last year.

## The Press

The 1919 Constitution of Finland provides safeguards for press freedom. In that same year a Freedom of the Press Act was passed; it sets out rights and responsibilities of the press and the circumstances under which the State may confiscate or suppress publication. The press may not defame another head of state nor publish anything to endanger relations with neighbouring states. There are stringent laws against libel and breach of copyright. The public and press have a legal right of access to all official documents (but with important exceptions) and the journalist has had, since 1966, a right to conceal his sources.

There are 60 dailies, 52 published in Finnish and eight in Swedish. Newspaper chains are virtually unknown. Newspapers of the left are owned by political parties or trade unions; those of the right by private shareholders or foundations. There are some large, privately owned newspapers that are independent of political parties. Helsinki has 10 dailies, including two in Swedish. All the periodicals are published in the capital. The circulation of the provincial press is strong, although Helsinki's big morning dailies are distributed nation-wide.

The paper with the largest circulation and the most respected for its standard of news coverage and commentary is *Helsingin Sanomat*. It is an independent paper that devotes six of

Constitutional  
Guarantee  
(1919)

Appeals

its 20 pages to advertisements. It derives 75 per cent of its revenue from advertising and 25 per cent from subscriptions and newsstand sales. It is the only really national newspaper and its circulation grows steadily. Finland, with Norway, ranks second to Iceland in the amount of publishing and reading of books per capita.

One of the interesting features of the press in Finland is that annual subscriptions account for 90 per cent of newspaper sales. It is said that there is little difference between the "quality" press and the "popular" press in Finland.

The house that publishes *Helsingin Sanomat* (Helsinki News) also publishes an afternoon tabloid. Considerable care is taken in both papers over coverage of violent incidents. The Commission was provided with a memo prepared by *Sanomat's* crime reporters, indicating that they eschew sensationalism, do not report details of violent acts, cooperate with the police, especially in kidnapping cases, do not glamourize terrorists, or exploit violence. They do not publish pictures of persons accused of crime, nor news of suicides. Because of the high percentage of subscriptions, there is no incentive to inflate crime on the front page. This newspaper has foreign correspondents in London, Washington and Moscow, in Central Europe based in Geneva, in Stockholm for Scandinavian coverage, with stringers in Oslo and Copenhagen. For 10 years, *Sanomat* has conducted an 18-month training school for journalists, for which state aid is given. There are some 600 applicants a year, of whom 25 are chosen, some with only high school and some with university training. Here the aspiring journalists obtain a general education about Finnish society as well as about international affairs, journalistic methods and ethics. The paper draws upon university professors to teach as well. Some 15 graduates are hired each year by *Sanomat*.

Finnish Press  
Council

A special staff handles all letters to the editor.

*Helsingin Sanomat*, like all newspapers and most Finnish periodicals, is a voluntary member of the *Lehdistöneuvos* (Finnish Press Council). This newspaper was a founding member. There is a written code of ethics published by the Press Council, which includes representatives of the press, the public and the law. It considers complaints and gives verdicts, which are widely published.

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# France

## Television

Regular radio transmission in France began in 1921. Before the Second World War, a publicly owned radio broadcasting system existed, as did a private, commercial radio network. Broadcasting became a controlled propaganda tool during the wartime occupation. Post-war, broadcasting became a state monopoly, operated as (RDF) *Radiodiffusion Française* under the authority of the Minister of Information. (ORTF) *Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française*, another state broadcasting monopoly, came into being in 1964. The previous close control by the government of the day was somewhat loosened upon the introduction of a board of directors for ORTF.

New Broadcast  
System  
(1974)

In 1974, French broadcasting was completely reorganized in an attempt at liberalization and decentralization. ORTF was replaced by seven separate companies:

- (a) *Télédiffusion de France* – a public company that controls the “hardware” of both radio and television. This wholly state-owned company is responsible for the development, operation and maintenance of the distribution network. It also undertakes research. There is a board of governors, one-half of which represents the government; the other half consists of two members of Parliament, representatives of the national programming companies (see below) and two staff representatives. The chairman of this board and the director-general are appointed by *Le Conseil d’État* (Council of State). This company is financed by payments to it from the national programming companies (in 1975, 616 million francs), plus a percentage of the total licence fees collected, which in 1975 amounted to 15 million francs.
- (b) Four national program companies,

one for radio and three for television, corresponding to the three television channels. These companies are wholly state-owned. Each has a governing body of six: two government representatives, one member of Parliament, one representative of the press, one of the cultural world and one staff representative. The chairmen of these boards and the companies’ directors-general are appointed by the Cabinet. Each board must satisfy itself as to the quality and decency of programs, the objectivity and accuracy of news broadcasts and the “expression of principal trends of thought and major flows of public opinion.” There is no external censorship. The four program companies are:

- (TF1) 1. (TF1) *La Société Nationale – Télévision Française – Antenne 1*  
This is a national service available all over the country, telecasting in colour since 1976 using, naturally enough, the French SECAM (*Sequentiel couleur à mémoire*) system. Its programming is general and it carries limited commercials. Sixty per cent of its income derives from advertising revenue. For 1975, the sum of 256 million francs was received from the licence fee split.
- (A2) 2. (A2) *La Société Nationale – Antenne 2*  
This is a national service available all over the country, telecasting in colour. General programming carries limited commercials, mornings and evenings. Forty-six per cent of A2’s income derives from advertising revenue. For 1975, A2 received 442 million francs from licence fees.
- (FR3) 3. (FR3) *La Société Nationale – France-Régions III*  
This service reaches only 50 per cent of the population. It carries minority and regional programming, films and youth programs.

		No commercials are allowed. FR3 draws its entire revenue from the licence fee split, which in 1975 amounted to 861 million francs.	on revenue from licence fees (currently \$32.49 for black-and-white sets and \$47.88 for colour), collected by the Ministry of Finance. Twenty-five per cent is revenue derived from advertising. These funds are managed by <i>La Régie Française de Publicité</i> (French Publicity Board) and are divided among the various companies according to specified criteria. In advising what split of fees should be made, the parliamentary committee must take into account the cultural value of programs, audience reaction and the revenue of the program companies.
(Radio France)	4. <i>Radio France</i>	This is the national programming organization for French radio. It also manages orchestras throughout the country. Radio programs are carried on the four specialized radio networks. Total revenue for <i>Radio-France</i> from licence fee split was 511 million francs in 1975.	In 1974, the government created <i>L'Institut National de l'Audiovisuel</i> (the National Audiovisual Institute) to look into the quality of television programming, and to design means of measuring quality to aid the parliamentary committee to account for that factor when deciding the distribution of licence fee income among programming companies.
(SFP)	(c) (SFP) <i>Société Française de Production et de Création Audiovisuelles</i>	This company produces film and television programs for sale to all of the program companies, both television and radio. Largely state-owned, it does provide some opportunity for private investment. The board of governors and the director-general are appointed by its shareholders, subject to the approval of the Prime Minister or his nominee.	Competition for audiences, and thus for greater revenue between the two commercial channels, is brisk. The three channels depend heavily upon feature films, using some 400 of them per year (reduced from 500 at the demand of film exhibitors). The number of advertising spots has been increased under the new system, although there are still restrictions against commercials for legitimate theatre, records, films and books, designed to protect the advertising revenue of the print press. The government is entitled to air time on demand and there is no provision for equal time for the opposition, or even for their regular appearances. All of the channels are turning to co-production with filmmakers or foreign television for films for television and cinema exhibition.
(INA)	(d) (INA) <i>L'Institut National de l'Audiovisuel</i>	This Institute is responsible for maintaining broadcast archives, undertaking research, vocational training and the distribution abroad of audio-visual material. INA's 1975 revenue from split of licence fees was 68 million francs.	The new broadcasting system has suffered from labour strife, including strikes over allegedly falling quantity and quality of production. The system has also been attacked in Parliament over the amount of air time given producers who have exclusive contracts with artists, and over
Parliamentary Broadcasting Committee		The 1974 <i>Loi Relative à la Radio et à la Télévision</i> ) defines the role of Parliament and its <i>Comité Parlementaire de la Radiodiffusion et Télévision Française</i> (Parliamentary Broadcasting Committee). This committee may give advice on its own initiative and must be consulted on specified matters. It is responsible for splitting licence fees among the various broadcasting entities. The relationships between the government and the broadcast organizations are regulated by their individual mandates. Seventy-five per cent of financing of the total system is based	

Research on  
Violence

Program  
Advisories

Border  
Spillover

"clandestine publicity" given to films and books by exposure of those directly linked with a new film, a stage show, or a book or record release.

There has been considerable discussion by the public and the press in France about violence in television and in films. ORTF undertook original research in the early 1970s. *Le Figaro* published a survey of public opinion in 1976 and a 1976 *Télé Jours* (a television digest) issue reported discussions with producers and others concerned with children's television. The consensus is against the inclusion of so much violent programming and there is an expressed desire for more specialized children's programming.

When a program contains incidents considered more than usually erotic or violent, a *carré blanc* (white square) is continuously flashed on the screen as a warning. This technique, however, is being replaced by a spoken warning given by an on-screen host while introducing the program. Films classified for theatrical showing only to those 18 and over may not be shown before 9:30 p.m. The television channels may not import more than 60 per cent of their programming. While there is no government control over broadcasting, general laws of the land apply, and on this basis, the Minister of the Interior intervened to prevent the television showing of *The Boston Strangler*.

France can receive broadcasts from beyond its borders from commercial stations with heavy American content, such as RTL (Luxembourg) and Europe No. 1 (Monaco) – in both of which the French government has major shareholdings – and radio stations in Monaco and Andorra. Cable television is being introduced, but for a limited purpose – not to bring in foreign signals from surrounding countries, but to extend existing French services to remote communities. It is estimated that some 89 per cent of French homes have television.

Impact of  
Television

New Policy for  
Control of  
Pornographic  
Films  
(1976)

## Film

France has long been among the most prolific of film-producing countries. But *Le Centre du Cinema* figures indicate that 51 per cent of the population do not now attend films. Since 1962, admissions have dropped by 43 per cent. Audiences are now mostly male, between 15 and 19, and are students. Three-quarters of the patrons are under 35. The French film output is high (200 films in 1973, 234 in 1974, over 220 in 1975 and about 200 in 1976) and, of those, about half are produced exclusively with French financing (97 in 1973 and 137 in 1974). French films are still about half of the number in circulation. Paris is unique in its offerings of new films (557 in 1973 and 607 in 1974), but audiences vary in size, as does the quality of the product itself.

After the Gaullist régime, French censorship laws were liberalized. Censorship of political matters and pornography were dropped but violence and drugs were retained as bases for classification, and any film that belittles or attacks human dignity was prohibited. A wave of pornographic films appeared, garnering 50 per cent of exhibitors' income. French producers got into the act, producing quick and cheap pornography of their own. In 1976, the government moved to control the situation. It designated certain cinemas as porno sites (those that had pornographic films as more than 50 per cent of their programs in the last three months of 1975). These cinemas were penalized by losing automatic exhibition film aid from the government, by being required to pay double box-office tax (33.3 per cent), and by being taxed a further 20 per cent on gross income. This put ticket prices up from \$3.40 to \$4.30 and, at first, reduced the amount of pornography offered. It now, however, appears to be on the rise again.

To counter objections from the private film industry, an *Office de Création Cinématographique* (Office of Film Creation) was set up to encourage quality

filmmaking and good script writing, to help new talent, to advance money for films, and to create a circuit of some 40 art and experimental film houses with special tax benefits for showing such quality films. As well, there is assistance to distributors who handle quality domestic and foreign films. The French do not pay for the dubbing of American films into French; these costs are absorbed by the American distributors.

Aid to the film industry has taken many forms since it was first introduced in 1948. Present government aid derives from a tax or levy on cinema tickets. This fund is administered by the (CNC) *Centre National de la Cinématographie* (National Film Centre), which distributes funds to producers and exhibitors. This centre reports through the Secretary of State and Culture. It has a 30-member advisory group. It provides for automatic aid to producers based upon box-office receipts. This aid must be re-invested in new films. There is also selective aid given as an advance upon box-office receipts. The control that can still be exercised by Parliament or the government makes the selective aid open to criticism, but it is more flexible. Film aid extends to advances and guarantees for feature films, shorts and newsreels, help to technical industries, cinema construction and guarantees for bank loans. French films are promoted abroad through *Unifrance Film*.

The industry has recently entered into agreements with television, requiring the networks to reduce from 500 to 400 the number of movies televised annually and restricting scheduling of such films on Friday nights. It has also negotiated better prices to be paid by television for rights to French films.

Cinemas are privately owned in France. A number of government-owned cinemas were sold to UGC, a federation of independent exhibitors, subject to a quota guarantee for showing quality films. Gaumont is one of France's top film companies and is active in production, distribution and exhibition.

Film  
Censorship  
Board  
(1956)

Appeal

The government subsidizes film societies and also supports *Cinémathèque Française* (French Film Archive). It enforces quotas – four to five weeks out of 13 must be devoted to the exhibition of French films.

The Secretary of State and Culture is concerned exclusively with film. The Ministry of the Interior controls imported publications and live theatre on an ex post basis. The Minister of State, responsible for radio and television, interferes only on an ex post basis. Films are the only major medium submitted for prior consideration, classification or censorship in France.

Under a 1956 statute (Articles 11 and 12 of the *Loi de Finances*) that requires a permit to show a film and provides for regulation and taxation of pornography, and regulation, taxation, and banning of incitement to violence through film, a *Commission de la Contrôle Cinématographique* (Film Censorship Board) has been set up. It is composed of persons appointed by the government, including eight representing the Departments of External Affairs, Cultural Affairs, Justice and Sports, eight representing the film industry and eight representing the professions, municipal mayors and magistrates, parents and families. Members are appointed for three-year terms. The president is appointed for two years and serves on a part-time basis. He is chosen from the members of the *Conseil d'État*. The board meets daily in panels of three or four members, viewing feature films and shorts. They may approve, classify, cut or reject films.

A dissatisfied producer or distributor may appeal to the full commission, which meets twice a week for such appeals. The commission's findings are actually only recommendations to the Minister of Cultural Affairs, who makes the political decision to issue the permit or not. The Minister has, on occasion, refused to accept the censors' advice, as in the case of Pasolini's *The Last 120 Days of Sodom*, which he



released for exhibition in only a small, expensive Paris cinema.

Films are classified for unrestricted admission, for admission restricted to those over 13 years, for admission restricted to those over 18 years and x-rated. Cutting is now rarely proposed, but classification is tight. x-ratings are applied to pornographic films, which may only be shown in some 120 *salles classées* (restricted cinemas); they are subject to extra taxes and ineligible for automatic film aid based on box-office receipts. No one under 18 may be admitted. The same system applies to films of extreme violence or films considered as an incitement to violence or racism (under the 1949 Protection of Children and Youth Act), although such films are not restricted to showing in the porno houses and the doubled tax has been applied only once on this basis. The board has recommended total prohibition of such excessively violent films as the Canadian film, *N'est pas l'enfer*. The board also has responsibility for film promotion material for theatre lobby display, et cetera, but not over press, radio or television advertisements. The press does, however, operate under agreed-on but informal self-control respecting film advertising, and television and radio are under control of the government agencies and ultimately of the National Assembly. It has been proposed that there should be a statutory basis for control of film trailers and other advertising and promotional material such as posters and lobby billboards.

The board does not have inspectors to assure that classification is adhered to by exhibitors. Some concern has been expressed about distributors reinserting excised materials after films have passed the censors.

Local police authorities are responsible for policing cinema admissions. To assist, the *Centre National du Cinéma* publishes a monthly list of films with their classification and permit number. Adolescents are not required to show proof of age. Local municipal authori-

ties have general powers for local safety and security and may prohibit the showing of a film if it is felt that it would be a threat to public order. That power was frequently used in the 1960s, but is now rarely exercised, as the local mayors and magistrates appear to accept the Minister's permit, based upon the censors' recommended classification. However, the system still permits local prosecution, notwithstanding approval by the censors.

Recently, a Paris court seized a French film and ordered it burned.

## The Press

Legislation regarding the print press generally relates back to an Act of 1881, which provides that anyone may publish a newspaper without being subject to prior censorship or banning. That statute delineates offences that are limitations on freedom of the press: incitement to crime; material defamatory of the President of the Republic, or to foreign heads of state or diplomats; publishing false news with a view to disturbing the peace; libel; seditious libel and revealing official secrets.

The statute also provides for a right of reply entitling any person to have a correction inserted, simply by requesting it in writing. Each copy of a publication must carry the name of the responsible editor.

The French penal code prohibits offences contrary to public morals. In 1949, a specific law respecting children and youth was enacted, prohibiting publications of all kinds that, by reason of their licentious or pornographic character or owing to the importance they attach to crime, violence or racism, endanger juveniles. That Act constituted a *Commission de Surveillance et de Contrôle des Publications Destinées à l'Enfance et à l'Adolescence* (the Commission on Children's and Youth Publications) under the Minister of Justice. The commission advises the Minister of the Interior on books or periodicals directed to minors (under 18), and may recommend that sales, exhibition and

Press Act  
(1881)

Right of Reply

Responsible  
Editor

Commission  
on Youth  
Publications  
(1949)

Local  
Authority

advertisements be prohibited. This body consists of judges, educators, representatives of the government and of families. Although there is provision to ban such materials, and the commission has so recommended to the Minister, none has as yet been banned. The commission may delay release of unsuitable materials for up to six months and for a further two months if interdiction is being considered. In practice, results are usually achieved through discussion with the importer or publisher, because it is difficult to enforce the legislation. Imported comic books are seen as the chief transgressors.

The French press has enjoyed substantial government aid since the Liberation in 1944. Such assistance includes exemption to press concerns from value-added tax; partial exemption to journalists themselves, who are assessed on only 70 per cent of their incomes; press subsidies for equipment and newsprint; special rates for transport and telecommunications. Print pornography attracts a special, punitive tax rate. A 1972 survey reported that, on the average, newspapers relied for 46.8 per cent of their total revenue on advertising (*Le Figaro*, 80 per cent). Only Paris newspapers have national circulation. There are not large press groups as in Britain and West Germany. The government supports a public printing operation for publishers who do not have their own facilities.

The number of dailies has been declining in the past 30 years. Except for *Le Monde*, most national dailies are in financial trouble, due to sharp increases in the cost of newsprint, a drop in advertising revenue and higher wages and postal rates. The important provincial press is doing better – its circulations are up. The healthiest Paris newspapers, *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro* (which is as old as Canada, having celebrated its centenary in 1967), have given their staffs a share in management and profits. The French are relatively small consumers of daily news-

papers, but enjoy magazines of general interest, news magazines, political periodicals, women's and other specialized magazines.

Newspapers such as *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde* and *L'Humanité* avoid reporting the news only as events, attempting to give background to show the process. *Le Monde* does not publish photographs. It has been stated that the print press helped to promote the banning of violent films on television before certain hours. All news media exercise restraint in the matter of reporting kidnappings, and cooperate with police authorities. There is care taken in reporting terrorism, hostage-taking, and political violence. There is no formal press control.

#### Special Inquiries (1976)

#### Inquiry into Violence in the News Media (1976)

There were, at the time of the Commission's consultations in France, twin government-appointed commissions whose mandates touched on violence. Neither has publicly reported at the time of this writing. Both were due to report in May 1977.

*La Commission d'Enquête sur la Violence dans les Médias d'Information* (Commission of Enquiry on Violence in the News Media), appointed by the President of the Republic, is chaired by B. Christian Chavanot, formerly head of French television, and now president of *Radio-Télévision Luxembourg*. It is attempting to develop a systematic catalogue and specification of types of problems and processes involved in violence and the news. Events are being analyzed on three levels (news-gathering, news selection and news presentation). The goal is to produce guidelines for the presentation and handling of news by reporters and editors, including "controlled reporting" or self-restraint. The commission is especially concerned with reports of kidnappings, hangings, hostage incidents and demonstrations. The commission's research includes questionnaires and interviews with opinion leaders. It appeared, at the time of consultation, that the commissioners' perceptions of the media violence problem

were similar to those of this Commission.

*Le Comité Présidentiel sur la Violence* (President's Committee on Violence) was established by the President of the Republic to study the subject of violence in depth. The committee is concerned with violence, delinquency and criminality. It is focused on the economic and criminal aspects of violence, but the mass media are among its concerns. The committee has 10 members and is chaired by Alain Peyrefitte, a former Cabinet minister. Its membership includes magistrates, lawyers and professors of law, a doctor, a director of police services, a director of an institute of criminology and an economist. It works on a part-time basis in five working sub-groups of two, each with a secretary. The five groups deal with the following subjects:

- a) Biological and psychological aspects of violence
- b) Violence and economic aspects, including standard of living and economic growth in relation to violence
- c) The efficacy of prisons and the system of administration of justice
- d) Violence in youth
- e) Violence and urbanism.

Each working group is hearing representations from individuals. In addition, the full committee plans to hold interviews with distinguished people in various fields to get their perspectives.

The committee has commissioned a modest program of research, being conducted at institutes of criminology and of public opinion. There is no full-time staff. Study areas of interest include the mass media, urbanization, lowering of morals, lack of self-respect, and lack of respect for authority, superiors and elders.

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the patient cooperation, information and advice offered during its consultations in France by:

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M. Deneuve, Mlle. Chabrier

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M. Asthier

*Le Ministère de la Justice* (Ministry of Justice)

M. Bourrelly

*La Commission de la Contrôle Cinématographique* (Film Censorship Commission)

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*Le Figaro*

M. Marin, M. Méar

*La Commission d'Enquête sur la Violence dans les Médias d'Information* (Commission on Violence in the News Media)

Christian Chavanon, M. Le Roy, N. Bujon, M. Séguin

*Le Comité Présidentiel sur la Violence* (President's Committee on Violence)

M. Du Moulin

# West Germany

## Television

Constitutional  
Guarantee  
(1949)

By the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*), the postwar Constitution of (West) Germany, freedom of speech is guaranteed and censorship forbidden, but freedom of the press (Article 5) is limited by the Penal Code, by laws to protect youth, laws of libel and slander and laws to protect personal integrity.

Under the Constitution, all powers that are not expressly reserved to the federal government fall to the jurisdiction of the *länder* (provinces). Those include the fields of education, culture and broadcasting. Very often, the *länder* cooperate in such fields by entering into treaties or agreements. The federal government is responsible only for external broadcasting.

In 1949, seven of the 11 *länder* created their own provincial broadcasting entities; four of the smaller *länder* paired together to create two networks. These nine are independent public corporations, with exclusive rights to broadcast in their own provinces or areas.

While the structures differ somewhat one from another, they are all marked by the technique of policy boards drawn from a wide representation of the public, including representatives of political parties, and usually including members of the provincial legislatures. Politics is a subject of wide debate in a divided Germany and, as might be expected, West German broadcasting is distinguished by many public affairs programs. The political parties and churches monitor broadcasts carefully for political or religious bias. The *länder* broadcasting networks, some of them larger than the CBC network, are:

- (BR) *Bayerischer Rundfunk* (Bavarian Broadcasting), Munich
- (HR) *Hessischer Rundfunk* (Hessian Broadcasting), Frankfurt
- (NDR) *Norddeutscher Rundfunk* (North German Broadcasting), Hamburg

- (RB) *Radio Bremen*, Bremen
- (SR) *Saarländischer*, Saarbrücken
- (SFR) *Senderfreies Berlin* (Radio Free Berlin), Berlin
- (SDR) *Süddeutscher Rundfunk* (South German Broadcasting), Stuttgart
- (SWF) *Südwestfunk* (South West Broadcasting), Baden-Baden
- (WDR) *Westdeutscher Rundfunk* (West German Broadcasting), Cologne.

In addition, there are two broadcasting entities created by acts of the federal *Bundestag* (Parliament) and financed from federal funds for broadcasting to the rest of Europe (especially East Germany) and overseas. They are:

- (DW) *Deutsche Welle* (German Wave), Cologne
- (DW) *Deutschlandfunk* (German Broadcasting), Cologne-Marienburg.

ARD  
(1950)

In 1950, these public corporations, nine *länder*-based and two federal, with the addition, as an observer, of (RIAS) *Rundfunk Im Amerikanischer Sektor* (Broadcasting in the American Sector), formed (ARD) *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Public Broadcasting Organization of the Federal Republic of Germany). Through the mechanism of a standing committee, located in Munich, consisting of representative of the *länder* networks, a national program called *Deutscher Fernsehen* is provided, with time slots designated for regional programming, on two channels, one and three.

The latter's programming is more of a educative and intellectual nature, and has only regional, not national, penetration.

Most of the financing for broadcasting in West Germany is derived from licence fees (currently \$54.72, but it varies by *land*) that are collected through the federal post office. There is no separate fee for colour sets. The collected licence fees are divided between the post office, for provision of technical services; ARD, which receives 70 per cent of the balance; and ZDF, which



gets the remainder. Part of the financing derives from commercials, which are permitted for a total of only 20 minutes per day, between the hours of 6 and 8 p.m., and never on Sunday. The whole West German system is said to be the wealthiest of all the public networks in the world. Increases in revenue can only be obtained by increasing the fee for licences (one licence may cover any number of sets in the household), which necessitates approval by the *länder* legislatures and is usually resisted by politicians. Increases may also be obtained by increasing advertising rates; this is dependent on obtaining an increased share of audience – the familiar “ratings game”.

Responsibility for national program hours is allocated to the various component networks by the standing committee. This quota system is based on the proportionate number to the whole of the television receivers in the network's broadcast area (e.g., WDR, with five million sets, provides 25 per cent; NDR, with three million, 20 per cent; BR, 17 per cent; SWF, SFB, HR and SDR 8 per cent each; and RB and SR, 3 per cent each). No network is permitted to specialize, except for the weather reports (HR), sports (WDR) and news (NDR). Otherwise, there are nine documentary, nine drama, nine current affairs and even nine religious departments within ARD. This is an expensive system of duplication, but it is said to produce a good balance of regional programming.

ARD's first channel is received all over the Republic. It broadcasts weekday afternoons from 4:15 through the evenings, with its last programs of news and weather at 10:45 p.m. On weekends the hours are longer. Stations broadcast school programs in the morning. Before the main newscast at 8:00 p.m. (*tagesschau*), family entertainment programs are interspersed with clustered commercials, not exceeding 20 minutes in the hours between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. After the news, there are dramas, documentaries and current affairs. There are eight

regional programs, up to two hours a day, usually broadcast in the early evening period (6 to 8 p.m.) when commercials are permitted. Of course, not all the programming is domestically produced. It includes series and films purchased from abroad. American films and series are purchased through *Degator* in Frankfurt. ARD, however, buys more from British and other sources, usually directly. ARD dubs foreign-language material at its own cost, which is about equivalent to the cost of purchase. There are dubbing specialists, technicians and actors in privately owned concerns in Munich and Hamburg.

ARD buys the whole of a British series (usually 6 to 13 parts) but selects acceptable episodes from among American series (often only 13 of the 26 to 39 episodes). It also sells its own products for export to Austria, Switzerland, Belgium and Holland, but its programs are specifically made for the German market and not directed to export sales. A subsidiary of ARD, (wwf) West German Commercial Television, produces and sells commercials for the 6 to 8 p.m. time slot. ARD now produces about 60 per cent and purchases the remaining 40 per cent of its programming.

Programs are produced in colour by the superior AEC-Telefunken PAL System, which has also been adopted in Italy, the four Scandinavian countries, Yugoslavia, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Brazil, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

#### Policy Boards

Because each of the ARD stations is a creature of its own *land* legislature, there are some differences in structure. Each network is independent of government control. Most networks have administrative councils of five or seven members, responsible for economic matters, especially the budget. There is usually also a broadcasting council, which approves the budget, studies complaints and is responsible for programming. By the statutes or inter-*land*

treaties incorporating the networks, relevant social groups are enumerated including churches, unions, employers, youth organizations, farmers' associations, newspaper publishers and journalists, sports organizations, community and municipal authorities, representatives of teachers and universities, authors, composers, musicians, and theatres. For example, at BR, 30 such groups elect their own representatives to a council of 49, on which political parties and the government are also represented. Political representation may not exceed a third of the total number. The broadcasting council appoints the director-general and approves the appointment of program directors and senior executives.

ARD Violence  
Research and  
Policy State-  
ment

At least some of the networks, notably BR and WDR, have their own research departments. ARD, with ZDF, forms a Joint Media Committee, which commissions research. In April 1972, BR's board published a policy statement on violence in television and in 1972 WDR hosted a symposium on the subject.

ARD produces the programs for the third channel, which does not reach the whole of the Republic. It is on the air for a few hours each evening, beginning at 8 or 9 p.m. Its material is intellectual, informative and innovative. It broadcasts educational material in the daytime for school purposes and includes a television vocational high school, *Telekolleg*.

ZDF  
(1961)

The second channel, received all over the Republic, is operated by a very different corporate model, much more like the familiar CBC. It is also a creature of the *länder*, but is based on an inter-*länder* treaty of 1961. This is (ZDF) *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (Second Channel German Television) of Mainz, which began broadcasting in April, 1963. It is an integrated structure, governed by a television board on which enumerated social groups are represented. By the treaty, the board is independent and is not subject to political or other directives.

ZDF Policy  
Board

ZDF's television board is made up of 66 members: 11 representatives of the signatory provinces to the agreement; three representatives of the federal government; 12 representatives of the political parties according to their representation in the federal Parliament; two representatives of each the Protestant and Catholic Churches; one representative of the Jewish Central Committee of West Germany; three representatives of the trade unions; two representatives of the West German Employers' Association; one representative each of the West German Agricultural Central Committee and the Skilled Trades' Central Organization; two representatives each of the West German Newspaper Publishers' Association and the Journalists' Association; four representatives of the Independent Welfare Organizations; four representatives of the leading municipal associations; one representative of the West German Sports Association; one representative of the Refugees' Association; ten representatives from the fields of education, science and art, and one representative each of groups of the self-employed, family organizations, women's organizations and youth organizations.

The representatives of the political parties and religious denominations are nominated completely independently of any provincial institutions. The organizations and associations nominate their own representatives, who are then appointed by the *länder* premiers.

The board elects the senior manager, the intendant, by a three-fifths majority vote, for five years. The work of the board is largely carried out by four committees dealing with finance, news, political and other programs, which meet every six or eight weeks. The board has discussed the issue of television violence and passed a resolution on it in 1972. It is particularly careful to monitor political balance in programming.

ZDF Violence  
Policy

The administrative board controls the financial activities of ZDF, and

approves the budget drawn up by the intendant, which is submitted afterwards to the television board. Of the nine members of the administrative board, one is nominated directly by the federal government, and three directly and jointly by the 11 *länder* premiers. The other five members are elected from the television board, from which they must withdraw after their election. They are not permitted to belong to any government or other legislative body. Here too, the inter-*länder* treaty ensures that the members have no economic or any other kind of interest that might conflict with their ZDF obligations.

ZDF's mandate requires it to provide alternative programming to that of ARD. (It is scheduled that way – except for news and public affairs, which are shown at the same time on both channels, presumably because it is thought that the viewer should not be entitled to escape a civic responsibility to be informed.) This is achieved by preplanning by a coordinating committee of the heads of ARD and ZDF. ZDF is on air continuously from late afternoon (4:30 p.m.) to about midnight, on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings and afternoons. ARD and ZDF provide joint programming in the mornings from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. for school broadcasts.

ZDF also receives a share of the licence fees collected by the federal post office. Its share, however, is only 22 per cent of the total collected, which represents less than half of its budget. The balance of its income is derived from commercials that, like ARD's, are restricted to a total of 20 minutes (averaged annually) appearing within the weekday time period of 6 to 8 p.m. Commercials themselves and programming around commercials are prepared by ZDF; there is no program sponsorship, and no commercials are allowed for political parties. Cigarette advertising and subliminal advertising are not allowed, nor is program interruption, and advertising blocks of five to seven minutes are separated from programming by a cartoon figure,

*mainzelmännchen*. Being thus more dependent upon advertising income, ZDF's programming leans to lighter fare than that of ARD. It is therefore more influenced by ratings, in an attempt to increase its advertising rates; it sometimes reaches phenomenal 80 to 90 per cent shares of the audience. ZDF purchases foreign programs (usually from the U.S.) directly, as well as producing many, both in-house and by purchase from freelancers. ZDF produces its own public affairs programs at Mainz and operates main production centres in West Berlin, Hamburg and Munich. For some years it has carried a program called *Aktenzeichen XY–Ungeklärt* (*File on XY–Unsolved*), which is also carried live in Austria and Switzerland. Its host, Edvard Zimmermann, shows clues and scenes of past unsolved crimes and invites listeners to call in information. The program is said to have been successful in assisting police authorities to solve crimes. (A program presumably modelled on it, entitled *Code 10-78*, was produced this season by Global Television, with the assistance of the Ontario Attorney General's department and the Ontario Provincial Police.) Host and producer are very sensitive about this program, and are careful not to demonstrate criminal methodology in such a way that it can be copied.

ZDF has a research department, which has studied the violence issue and in 1971 published *Gewalt Im Fernsehen* (*Violence in Television*), a survey of the literature. There is ongoing research, both in-house and in cooperation with ARD, including a two-year survey, done in the early 1970s, on how people spend their leisure time. Research findings are regularly discussed with producers and their awareness leads to intelligent responsiveness. ZDF's council passed a resolution in respect of violence in 1971. ZDF is now making a series of 13 brief programs on understanding television. Its intendant intermittently appears on air with a panel of viewers to discuss their complaints.

ZDF Violence  
Research and  
Policy

The two television systems have conducted, separately and together, research on the subject. The governing boards of ARD's individual networks and of ZDF have passed resolutions on the subject. The magazine *Eltern* (*Parents*) has held a conference on the subject (1976), as has WDR (1972); sociologists at *Wirtschafts und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät* (the Institute of Sociology and Mass Communications) at the University of Cologne, are engaged in exploring the influence of other socializing influences upon juvenile delinquents, and many learned papers and books have been published on the subject. The Audiovisual Centre at Hildesheim and university researchers at Frankfurt currently are conducting UNESCO-funded research.

Although the Constitution forbids censorship, freedom of expression is subject to certain limitations. Against a background of public concern over incidents of terrorism and a series of bank robberies marked by hostage-taking, the federal Parliament enacted an amendment to its Penal Code in 1976, designed to restrict depictions that might "glorify violence". Because television is in the public sector, it is argued that it is subject to internal or self-control, whereas film and print industries, being in the private sector, are considered to require legislation for control. The Penal Code amendment is contentious. Because it was passed only in 1976, it has not yet received judicial interpretation. New Section 131 (applying to all media) provides legal sanction against anyone "who spreads, disseminates, publicly exhibits, posts on billboards, writings, television films, et cetera . . . that which shows violence against humans in cruel or inhuman ways, and thereby glorifies violence, or which incites to racial hatred." Neither "violence" nor "glorifies" is defined.

Penal Law  
(1976)

## Film

The film industry is privately organized in West Germany. Before the war, films were subject to government censorship; during the war, they became instruments of government propaganda. After the war, the occupying forces decided to leave film censorship to the film industry. An association of film producers, distributors and cinema owners set up and financed the office of *Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Filmwirtschaft* (Voluntary Self-control of the Film Industry) at Weisbaden. As its title indicates, this is a voluntary censorship system. It works because the cinema owners have pledged themselves not to show films that do not carry the censor's seal. Producers, distributors and exhibitors, of course, are all bound by the Youth Law (1953), by the Penal Law amendment (1976) and by Section 1849 of the Penal Code, which prohibits pornography. Although it is not a defence to a criminal prosecution that the film has been passed by the censor, yet it is considered to be a persuasive argument, and is perceived as a form of protection on which the industry relies. For that reason, all adult films are passed to the censor voluntarily.

The censorship board may accept, cut or reject a film, and it classifies films by age of permitted audience. Censorship of adult films seems fairly liberal; for example, *La Grande Bouffe*, *The Godfather* and *Last Tango in Paris* were all passed without cuts. In the spring of 1976, however, Pasolini's *The Last 120 Days of Sodom* was prosecuted in eight different German communities. In one such prosecution, a local judge forbade the showing of the movie throughout the whole of West Germany, although it had already been passed by the censor. Where censorship rests on a voluntary body, prosecutions on a local basis have become the practice, with great disruption to the industry, which must concern itself with not just the national standard represented by the voluntary body, but

Voluntary Film  
Censorship

Local  
Authority



also with varied local or community standards. (See also: U. K., Italy, United States, and France.)

The Federal Youth Protection Act (1953) sets out criteria for films that may be shown to those 18 or under, as well as some absolute prohibitions. Under this Act, the *länder* have the legal right to decide on the suitability of films for youth, but all delegate this authority to the industry censor, so that it is actually obligatory to have films for youth and children approved by the censorship office for cinema exhibition.

This office has written its own regulations regarding cuts. It classifies films for children aged six or under, aged 12 or under, aged 16 and under and aged 18 and under. Films offered for use for those 18 and under are seen by a committee of five persons. The director, who was formerly a film executive and who holds a lifetime appointment, is assisted by a former judge and three part-time volunteers. These volunteers are specialists in fields relating to children and are drawn from lists submitted by various *länder* groups, such as churches, youth groups and social agencies. They meet on a revolving basis, for a week at a time, to view seven or eight feature films and short subjects. The two permanent members see all of the films, some 300 features and 600 shorts annually. Foreign-language films must be dubbed before submission, or be accompanied by a film script in German.

The censor also passes newspaper advertising for movies and cinema broadsheets. It must pass films shown in drive-ins and on Lufthansa, but does not censor films for television.

Although still attracting audiences of 144 million, the West German film industry, in the late 1950s a world leader in film production, is in trouble. In common with the experience of other countries, the introduction of television has had a major impact, evident in the drop of audience numbers and the closing of cinemas. There were 7,000 cinemas in the 1950s; today there

are about 3,100. Cinema attendance since the 1950s peak has been reduced by two-thirds. The share of the domestic market for German films has fallen to 20 per cent, even though some 80 features are produced each year and often are awarded international prizes.

Analysis of recent audiences shows them to be 57 per cent male, although the population is 54 per cent female. Seventy per cent of tickets are bought by those aged 14 to 29, although they are only 25 percent of the population.

Culture, education and broadcasting are within the legal competence of the *länder*, under the Constitution. The federal government, therefore, formerly confined its support of the film industry to awarding prizes under the Ministry of the Interior, who is responsible for Federal Culture matters, for quality and for films enhancing German prestige abroad.

In late 1967, the federal government created (FFG) *Filmförderungsgesetz* (the Film Aid Fund) under the Economic Ministry. To receive assistance, a film "must neither offend religious nor moral sentiments, nor be anti-Constitutional." New federal assistance was provided by the federal Economic Ministry in spring 1974; it set up the *Filmförderungsanstalt* (Film Assistance Institute) at Berlin to administer a fund deriving from a levy of 15 pfenning on each movie ticket sold. That levy produced, together with funds from the sale of the former Nazi movie company UFA, and other resources, a total of 25 million DM. Of this, some six million DM go for basic film assistance, three million for supplementary assistance and six million for project development. The basic assistance is for scripts and production costs. Aid may be given to producers (even for co-productions) based on criteria of German content, and on their earlier, successful track record. Supplementary grants are based on the film's assessment as "good entertainment". Both grants must be re-invested in production of new films.

Film Aid  
Policy  
(1974)

The law includes support for cinema owners by way of subsidies for capital costs for renewal, such as redecoration, and new equipment. Fewer and fewer cinemas are now German-owned and only one of four major film distributors is German, the others being American in ownership. There is as yet no quota for German films, which must meet opposition from both television and foreign films, but quotas are under consideration. The FAA has persuaded the two television networks, ARD and ZDF, to put up 35 million DM over a five-year period, for co-production of feature films to be shown in cinemas and, after a two-year delay, on television. The Interior Ministry continues to provide aid for high-quality films through awards and prizes, through aid to the cinemas that show German films and for advertising high-quality films, and the *länder* ministries for culture continue to provide cultural aid, particularly to young producers.

German film producers are finding it difficult to have their films exhibited. The American film-producing corporations such as 20th Century Fox and MGM have moved in to buy up West German cinemas, although they are prohibited from owning cinemas in the U.S. American film distributors have raised film rental prices and demanded immediate payment on penalty of a 5 per cent surcharge. The penetration of the West German film industry at all three levels (exhibition, distribution and imports) is causing considerable concern to both film industry and government.

Increasingly, German municipalities are giving aid to, or owning outright, cinemas that are primarily interested in cultural, rather than commercial, film. There are about 85 such cinemas. In addition, aid is given from various levels of government for the international film festivals of Berlin, Mannheim and Ober-Lausen and the National Film Week planned for Duisburg in 1977, as well as for German entries in foreign film festivals.

#### Constitutional Guarantee (1949)

## The Press

It was 1949 before the Allies occupying West Germany permitted restoration of freedom of the press, which had been enjoyed under the Weimar Republic. The Basic Law of the Republic (the Constitution promulgated in 1949), Article Five, provides:

Everyone has the right freely to express or to disseminate his opinion by speech, writing and pictures and freely to inform himself from generally accessible sources. Freedom of the press and freedom of reporting by radio and motion pictures are guaranteed. There shall be no censorship. These rights are limited by the provisions of the general laws, the provisions of the law for the protection of youth, and by the right to inviolability of personal honour.

These last qualifications refer to the federal law penalizing the sale to young people of literature judged to endanger morality, and to articles in the Penal Code relating to defamation.

Freedom of the press is also guaranteed by laws of the *länder*. There are a great many dailies; almost every major community has at least one, but many are really only regional editions. The average daily newspaper circulation is the highest on the continent. A number of dailies produce compendious Saturday issues. No daily newspaper is directly owned by a political party, and most are politically independent.

There is a flourishing periodical press. Newspaper and periodical ownership is concentrated, the Axel Springer Group being the largest newspaper publishing group in continental Europe. This concentration has so concerned the government that no less than three government commissions have studied methods to avoid further concentration. The most effective was the 1968 Günther Commission, which recommended limits on the proportion of circulation that publishing groups should control, and tax relief for smaller newspapers.

Press Aid

There is a program of government aid for modernization of plants. The smaller publishing concerns have cooperated in news gathering and advertising, to reduce costs.

Voluntary  
Press Council  
(1956)

*Deutscher Presserat* (the German Press Council) was founded in 1956. The Association of Journalists names 10 members, and the Newspaper and Publishers' Association names 10 members to the voluntary council, which receives and acts on complaints of breach of ethics (there is no code) and protects freedom of expression from attack. Membership includes the periodical press. Although it is not very well known to the public, the press council enjoys a good reputation.

Periodical  
Council  
(1966)

There is a similar voluntary *Verband Deutscher Zeitschriftenverleger* (Council of the German Magazine Organization) created in 1966, comprised of four of the big mass circulation illustrated magazines: *Stern*, *Quick*, *Revue* and *Neue Illustrierte*. There is a four-man committee of publishers and editors of the member magazines, who have, by contract, agreed to be bound by decisions. The committee is assisted by a council representing church, family and cultural groups. There is a published code prohibiting publication of material harmful to youth; the 1976 Penal Code amendment applies to print and pictures.

Research on the press is carried on in Munich at *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kommunikationsforschung* (Institute for Communications Research) on aspects such as qualifications of magazine journalists, advertising, content analysis of newspapers, et cetera.

Youth  
Protection Act  
(1953)

The *Bundesministerium für Jugend, Familie und Gesundheit* (Federal Ministry of Youth, Family and Health) administers the Youth Protection Act (1953). Under this Act, nothing that might negatively influence the education of youth, physically or psychologically, may be shown or published.

Examination  
Board for  
Youth  
Publications

Operating under this Ministry is an administrative body, *Bundesprüfstelle für Jugendgefährdende Schriften* (Federal Examination Board for Publica-

tions). To this, the government appoints individuals who are nominated from various groups in society for three-year appointments; government representatives are also appointed to the board. They operate as a panel to examine all written material; the board may act only upon the complaint of one or more of the *länder* or of the Youth Ministry. Because the Federal Republic allows the sale, to adults only, of explicit soft-core pornography (not in connection with children, animals or violence), "sexshops" abound, and the board has a significant collection of both soft-core and hard-core pornography for study.

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# Hungary

## Television

(MRT)  
Hungarian  
Broadcasting

Wired broadcasting was originated by a Hungarian, Tivador Puskas (1845-83). Broadcasting in Hungary has been a state monopoly since 1925. This function is now carried out for 11 million Hungarians by (MRT) *Magyar Rádío És Televízió* (Hungarian Broadcasting).

Policy on  
Violence

Policy Board

The policy group is an advisory council made up of the president of MRT, his administrative officer, four vice-presidents and the secretary of the *Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt* (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party). The president and the main department heads are appointed by the *Miniszter Tanács* (Council of Ministers or Cabinet).

Broadcasting services, including three radio programs and two television channels, are financed by annual licence fees (television 50 forints, or \$2.50, per month). These fees are collected by billing on telephone or hydro accounts. There are revenues from limited commercial advertising, but these revenues are used for television employees' social purposes. Advertising is restricted to social services and the messages are presented in five-minute clusters on radio and in 10-minute blocks on television in late afternoon and early evening. The commercials are treated as separate information programs. The colour system used is the French SECAM. TV1 telecasts school broadcasts during the mornings and afternoons; general programming begins at 4 p.m. and goes to about 10:30 p.m. On Sunday, broadcasts begin at 8 a.m. and go to 10:30 p.m. or so. This network is seen in over 95 per cent of the country. TV2, however, is only seen in Budapest. Since going on the air in 1971, its programming has been more intellectual, planned for special audiences. One of the three radio networks. Channel 1, is received nationwide. It carries school broad-

casts from 8 a.m. until noon, with breaks. Programs are planned a year in advance to assist teachers' in their planning. In the afternoon, broadcasts are repeated for children on the afternoon school shift. There are no school broadcasts on school holidays. That time is used for programming for teachers. Sixty per cent of radio programming is music.

There are no written directives about violent content but general guidelines have been discussed by the Party Congress and the staff of MRT is as sensitized to harmful broadcast material as is that of *Polskie Radio* (see Poland). The aim of both radio and television is to inform and not to be sensational.

Mass communications are meant to inform people and to get across a system of values in Hungary. There is thus no need for written rules or for censorship, since everyone understands and supports the goals.

Between 1965 and 1975, there were 120 violent crimes per 10,000 Hungarians. From 1965 to 1970, there was a gradual increase and from 1970 to 1975, a sharp jump. The crime rate has now dropped back to 107 per 10,000. Capital punishment still exists in Hungary.

MRT purchases series, documentaries and films from abroad. Domestic films at least 10 years old are shown and imported film is shown two years after cinema release. Imported programs are relatively inexpensive for MRT to buy, because all over Continental Europe prices are based on the number of licences sold, but Hungary has foreign currency shortages and purchases are carefully made. Films are bought singly and not in packages. Television film buyers cooperate with buyers for cinema exhibition, who have first choice at what becomes available.

Aside from school broadcasts, there is a wide range of programs for special groups: older people, agricultural and shift workers and children, who have out-of-school programming for four age groups. There is a delightful children's story time at 7 p.m. each

evening with cartoons and puppets. The program has a theme song, a teddy bear who brushes his teeth, exercises, listens to the story and then goes off to bed, after turning off the television set! It is said that Hungarian children dutifully follow the little bear's example. There is a feedback program called *Forum* whose subject is published in advance; the audience phones in for discussion. MRT engages in co-productions with a number of countries. It has done at least one with Radio-Canada and was completing the first with CBC, John Hirsch's *His Mother*, at the time of the Commission's visit. There are many sports and light entertainment programs, 100 original dramas a year, a symphony, a children's choir and a dance-music group. There is a commercial arm of MRT that controls the advertising, publishes books and sells tapes.

Institute of  
Cultural  
Relations

*Kulturális Kapcsolatok Intézete* (Institute of Cultural Relations) deals overall with cultural matters. Culture and education are important to the whole of Hungarian society. The Commission was told that these are not commodities as in capitalist countries. Opera and theatre are heavily subsidized both as to production and ticket price. A record of classical music costs 60 florints (\$3.00) and a pop record, produced by commercial interests, much more. Works of art are sold to institutions only when they have been declared to be worthwhile by a jury. As explained to the Commission:

The main rule in our society is that you can write or show anything. It has to reach some standards and must not be against the principles of the social system. And you can criticize every institution in the country. We are willing to subsidize fine music and records and theatres because we believe it is our job to help people have a taste for fine things, and to teach a population good taste takes time.

Twelve per cent of the state budget goes for cultural and educational purposes. There are 75 theatres in Buda-

Hungarian  
Research  
Institute

pest; five are state-supported, the others owned or supported by municipalities. The "kitsch tax" represents a surtax on material—books, films and records of inferior artistic merit. The proceeds of these surtaxes are invested to support better quality production.

*Tomegkommunikációs Kutató Központ* (Hungarian Research Institute for Telecommunications and Mass Media) concentrates on radio and television research, as it is attached to MRT. Both sociologists and psychologists are employed and the main focus of the research is on social behaviour and communications. The Institute employs 25 interviewers to do sampling. Research is carried on to assess the effect of integrated media; more usual audience research is done, utilizing an enjoyment index. Content analysis is done. There is also a study of three communities on the impact of the introduction of television and a project that examines public attitudes to gypsies, arising from film and print. Newspaper research is done here on a special contractual basis, including comparisons of the impact of films and newspapers. The Institute publishes regularly, including some English summaries.

## Film

The Hungarian film industry was nationalized in 1948. By 1953, film production had fallen to eight features a year. In the past 10 years, attendance at films almost halved from its peak in 1960. Film audiences are now younger, the majority being under 25. About 20 films per year are now produced (some of those through the experimental workshops of the Béla Balázo Studios). Film co-productions are undertaken with Iron Curtain countries. If a film is of low cultural quality, the "kitsch tax" is levied and proceeds are channelled to a central cultural fund for production of more desirable works.

*Kulturális Minisztérium* (the Ministry of Culture), through its *Filmfőigazgatóság* (Film Directorate),

Impact of  
Television

lays down written rules of what is acceptable with regard to violence in both domestic and imported films. Films are purchased by an agency responsible for buying films abroad, which also manages cinemas (MOKEP). Usually, a television buyer will accompany the MOKEP purchase group. All films purchased must then be passed by the Film Consumer Commission (a jury of critics and experts advising the Film Directorate). The commission may make cuts only with the distributor's approval. It classifies films as artistically valuable or commercial, and by ages (14 and 18) for permitted admission. These classifications are reflected in two ways: a higher ticket price is imposed for commercial films than for artistic films, and classification determines which cinema circuit will exhibit the film. Films may be shown to much smaller and more selective audiences in a network of state art cinemas operated for film clubs, and in film museums, or may be released for general distribution to the state or municipally owned cinemas.

It was estimated that annual world film production is some 3,500 films, of which 1,000 at least are out of the question for MOKEP purchase. Some 170 films are annually distributed in Hungary, including the domestic product. MOKEP learns of available films through film magazines, international film festivals, and attendance at distributors' screenings. MOKEP arranges for dubbing—Hungarian is a rare language, having some commonalities with such languages as Finnish and Estonian but with few others. Dubbing is an expensive process, an art in itself, done in a state facility and financed one-half from box-office receipts and one-half from state subsidy.

MOKEP rarely buys packages of films because such packages would probably include kitsch. Ticket prices range from two florints (10 cents) up to 10 florints (50 cents) and there are reductions for students, soldiers and pensioners.

Rejected by the Film Consumer Commission for exhibition in Hungary were:

*Jaws*, *Godfather I and II*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, *La Grande Bouffe*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Straw Dogs*, *Earthquake* (for violence) and *Sound of Music* and *Love Story* (as kitsch).

Classified by age or for museum showings were:

Polanski's *Macbeth*, *Midnight Cowboy*, *The Decameron*, Fellini's *Satyricon*, *Paper Moon*.

Passed for general distribution were: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Day of the Jackal*.

Films are rejected on the grounds of violence, pornography, as being kitsch or as containing racial discrimination.

*Hungarofilm* promotes sales of Hungarian films abroad.

*Mafilm* studio is the state-owned Hungarian film-production arm. It runs four independent studios under the Culture Ministry. Directors are graduates of *Filmművészeti Főiskola* (the School of Film Arts). They are paid salaries. Actors and actresses are salaried employees of state-operated legitimate theatres and are hired for films. They are classified as to skill level, and paid by that classification.

Constitutional  
Guarantee  
(1848)

## The Press

Since the Hungarian revolution of 1848, the State Constitution has ensured freedom of conscience, religious worship, speech, the press and assembly, as well as freedom for creative work in the sciences and arts (the latter by a 1972 constitutional amendment). There is some private ownership of publications and no censorship as such, but printing works, most publishing houses and paper mills are all nationalized. By a 1963 statute, editorial criticism and critical letters from the public must be investigated promptly by the institution criticized. There are frequent conferences between journalists and readers, often held in factories and barns. The Penal Code prohibits provocation of hatred

Right of Reply

of minorities by the press and disclosure of state secrets as well as incitement to crime and libel.

Since a decree of 1959, individuals and institutions aggrieved by false press reports may demand rectification. A government minister is empowered to enforce this right of reply. The Information Office, founded in 1957, grants newspaper licences, guides newspapers, distributes newsprint and controls the national news agency. Most newspapers are the organs of political parties, labour unions, youth or social organizations. There is a high circulation of daily newspapers and some 80 per cent are sold by subscription. The six Budapest dailies circulate nationally and the most important is that of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

Books are regarded primarily as vehicles for culture, information and education. The board of publishers in the Ministry of Culture, with its advisory board, the Council of Publishers, controls book publication. Books are imported and exported through *Kultura*.

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Szalt Horvath



# Italy

## Television

Constitutional  
Guarantee  
(1948)

The Constitution of the Italian Republic, which came into force January 1, 1948, guarantees freedom of thought, speech and writing, and prohibits censorship or control of the press. It specifically states that education, the arts and science shall be free. Private enterprise, including the press, is permitted so long as it does not run counter to the social well-being nor constitute a danger to security, freedom and human dignity. The Constitution defines Italy's goal as the full development of the human personality; this implicitly excludes violence.

(RAI)  
Italian  
Broadcasting  
(1925)

(RAI) *Radio Televisione Italiana* (Italian Broadcasting) is a joint stock company, now 51 years old, owned 92 per cent by the state and the balance by *Cisiae*, an association of publishers, editors and writers, which holds a legal monopoly on the right to broadcast and telecast. A 1974 decision of the Constitutional Court, however, held RAI's broadcasting monopoly to be unconstitutional, even as Parliament was debating a new charter for RAI.

There have been hundreds of illegal local commercial radio stations (estimates range from 200 to 500), and an additional 70 independent local television stations, which have mushroomed in the regions since the Court's decision. There is concern that they may form themselves into a commercial network, progress to television and challenge RAI.

Border  
Spillover

Authorities have also been much concerned with foreign commercial telecasts aimed deliberately at the Italian market, in the French language from Monte Carlo and in Italian from Lugano, Switzerland and Capodistria, Yugoslavia; these have cut into domestic audiences. These extra-territorial broadcasting enterprises carry extensive U.S. programming, including many films. By action of the Italian government at the end of 1976, com-

Parliamentary  
Broadcasting  
Committee

Parliamentary  
Mandate  
Supervisory  
Committee

Policy Board

mercials were deleted from cable transmission of these stations, in an attempt to erode their financial base to protect Italian television and film industries.

RAI's monopoly derives from an agreement with *Ministero delle Poste e Telecomunicazioni* (the Ministry of Posts and Communications). Its charter was amended in 1974 to provide for restructuring, intended to free RAI from excessive political interference.

By 1976, considerable change was beginning to be noticed. In the past, it appears that partisan political influence was very strong, from the appointment of top management down. That is said to be breaking down now into greater independence, or at least a shift to parliamentary control rather than governmental.

*Comissione Parlamentare Sui Programmi Radio e Televisione* is a 30-member parliamentary committee responsible for the standard of programs, and *Comissione per la Salva Guardia Stazioni Indipendenti* is a committee chosen from all parliamentary groups, to safeguard the political independence and objectivity of broadcasting. Each year Parliament decides on RAI's budget, including how much of it may be raised by advertising. There is a new board of governors, two-thirds of which is appointed by Parliament, and one-third by the regions. This board now selects its own president; formerly he was an appointee of the government of the day. As of March 1976, the news departments have been made autonomous, reporting directly to the board. Because newspaper circulation in Italy is very low, most Italians rely upon broadcast news. The new independence of the news departments has been hailed by critics and public alike.

There are published regulations for broadcasting and film. Article 13 prohibits the telecasting of plays and films that have been denied a licence or that are classified as being unsuitable for showing to those 18 or under. RAI is permitted to show domestic films, but only if they are at least five years old,

and because of pressure of the film industry, only one film may be shown per week. There are also provisions in the Criminal Code against exhibitions that offend against public morality, including those containing "excessive violence", which is undefined.

The advertising agencies have committed themselves, voluntarily, to a code of self-regulation, adherence to which is supervised by a commission. The code prohibits advertising that is indecent, vulgar, or disgusting by reason of violence, sex, superstition and/or fear.

Broadcast authorities are careful in their coverage of such news events as kidnapping, hijacking and terrorism; no suicides are reported, and coverage of disasters such as Friuli is of a helpful, rather than sensational, nature. RAI is sensitive to the fact that, although telecasting at first appeared beneficial in breaking down traditional regional isolation in Italy, it has also been instrumental in destroying ancient traditions, language and customs, which are deemed worth preserving. The pendulum is now swinging back toward support of regional cultures.

Channel 1 (*Programme Nazionale*) broadcasts from 4:45 p.m. until midnight, about 70 hours per week, and extends to 98 per cent of Italy; Channel 2 (*Secondo Canale*) now reaches only 91 per cent of the population, but is enlarging its coverage area. It is on the air from 7:05 p.m. Its last transmission is the final news at 11 p.m., a total of 25 hours per week. There are plans for a third, regional, channel. RAI also operates three radio channels. School broadcasting in the mornings is prepared by a special section. Each of the television and radio channels has a news department that competes with the others.

The main news for Channel 1, *Telegiornale*, runs from 8 to 8:30 p.m., while that of Channel 2 is from 7:30 to 7:45 p.m.

Programming is designed to give viewers alternative choices. Total audience is estimated to be 22 million, and

average viewing time has gone from one hour and 20 minutes to two hours, according to the latest available figures.

There are four production centres, at Rome, Turin, Milan and Naples. Most production takes place at Rome, but there is a move to decentralize. Production is done in-house, by co-production and by commissioned freelance work. RAI is particularly noted for the amount and quality of work it commissions from well-known independent filmmakers, whereby it retains television rights, leaving cinema rights to the producers. It has produced *The Odyssey* (seven hours at \$3½ million), the *Aeneid*, *Michaelangelo*, *Leonardo da Vinci*, *Jesus of Nazareth* (cost of this production – \$12 million), *Moses* and *The Life of Shakespeare*. These television blockbusters have sold widely on the international market.

RAI is financed chiefly through radio and television licence fees of \$23.94 per set. An increase in licence fees requires an act of both Houses of Parliament. Advertising is allowed for only 5 per cent of air time. Programs are never sponsored; advertising is clustered around short segments, one called *Carosello* being popular with both children and adults. Programs are not interrupted by commercials. Advertising is limited because of pressure from the print media who consider the broadcasting monopoly to be unfair competition in the scramble for advertising revenue. An RAI subsidiary, (SIPRA) *Società Italiana Pubblicità per Azioni*, has exclusive control over all television and radio commercials. Another subsidiary, (SACIS) *Società per Azioni Commerciale Iniziative Spettacolo*, has control of advertising copy and allotment of time to advertisers for radio and television commercials and is responsible for the commercial sale and distribution of RAI's programs, both radio and television. There is no particular incentive for RAI to chase the advertising dollar. There appears to be no public pressure to extend the amount of the time available for televi-

sion commercials. There does appear to be new incentive to increase revenues by sale of programs abroad. If commercial radio and television become legally established, this could force a re-examination of RAI's commercial policies.

There is a third RAI subsidiary at Turin, *Edizione Rai-Radiotelevisione Italiana*, a publishing house that publishes RAI's communications studies.

RAI adopted the German PAL system and began experimental telecasting in colour in July 1976, in time for the Olympics. The use of colour is expanding in 1977. There was considerable parliamentary debate as to whether colour should be adopted, considering Italy's current economic condition.

Only films that are classified for those below 18 years old may be televised. Viewer warnings—small discs, flashing intermittently—are sometimes used, especially for sexual scenes, after 9 p.m. The question about rights to edit seems to rely on terms of purchase; this usually is covered by international copyright law. RAI buys imported series in blocks, but does not necessarily show all episodes. It does buy films in packages. Purchase of Italian feature films is covered by an agreement with the Association of Film Producers and Distributors. Foreign films are always dubbed at RAI's cost.

RAI has a highly developed research department that conducts surveys for audience ratings, demographics, enjoyment indices, et cetera. It began research into the question of violent content early, when it commissioned two psychiatrists from the University of Rome, Franco Ferracuti and Renato Lazzari; their study was published in 1968. Dr. Ferracuti is very active in work commissioned for the Council of Europe and in Puerto Rico. At present he is at work on RAI research respecting pornography, in anticipation of telecasting modern films with their higher levels of explicit sex. RAI's Research Department has commissioned work at several universities in Italy and has produced empiri-

cal research, including a two-year content analysis study that covered not only television, but also films and the press and comparative studies of laws. The sample was limited to prime-time television, and did not include news or advertising. RAI did extensive research on news 10 years ago, and has 80 volumes of research on children, done in 10 universities over a period of 15 years. There are projects respecting *fumeto* (comics), advertising to children, movie trailers, et cetera.

The effect of this research has been to keep down violence on Italian television through sensitizing producers to its impact. This rich source of research appears to be virtually unknown to North Americans.

Italian researchers have concluded that there is no point in further research on the harmful effects of television viewing; the only point now is a political one as to what values the public wants to preserve.

## Film

Because Article 21 of the Italian Constitution forbids immoral publications, it was decided in 1962 that it would constitute a legal basis for censorship of film, notwithstanding constitutional guarantees for free speech and for freedom in the arts and sciences. Consequently, a Censorship Board operates under *Ministero del Turismo dello Spettacolo* (the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment) under the statute of April 1962, Articles 31 to 161, decreed in force in January 1964. The guidelines for censorship set out in the statute provide that films may be rejected only if there is an offence against morality (obscenity). Films are classified according to the ages of the audience permitted, and the need to guard the morality of youth. Article 9 refers to classification of films on the basis of unacceptable language or gestures or approval of unacceptable behaviour, or violence against humans or animals, or material dealing with operations, hypnotism, Satanism, nar-

The Film  
Censorship  
Board  
(1964)

cotics or matters likely to incite to hatred or violence.

*Commissione Censura Cinematografica* (Film Censorship Board) is made up of a chairman, appointed by a committee of judges called the *Consiglio Superiore* (High Court Council) and eight committees of seven members each. Each committee is headed by a high court judge, and consists of three university professors (law, education and psychology), appointed by the Tourism Ministry, and three industry representatives who are appointed by associations of directors, film producers and critics. The board members are so numerous because of the volume of work. Members are generally appointed for two years and are often reappointed. They see about 400 films per year, meeting once or twice a week. The committees do not specialize. The board is independent of the Ministry. The same standards are applied to domestic and foreign films. All films shown in public, save those shown on television, must be submitted. (Live theatre presentations are not included.) The Criminal Code imposes as penalties for showing films that have not been passed by the Board, fines of up to 30,000 lire and closure of cinemas for up to 30 days.

Local  
Authority

One committee sees a film and may approve it as is, for general exhibition, classify it by prohibiting it to be shown to those under 18 or under 14, or ask for cuts, or totally reject it. It should be remembered that films are covered by the Criminal Law provisions on obscenity and standards of decency, and the Censorship Board's decisions to permit showings of the film does not constitute a defence to a criminal prosecution: Pasolini's *The Last 120 Days of Sodom* was passed, but a local criminal prosecution was successfully launched. The same fate befell *Last Tango in Paris*. There is also another regulation outlining what may be shown in film posters and other promotional material.

Appeal

If the producer or distributor does not agree with the board's disposition,

he may appeal, whereupon two other committees view the film. If he remains dissatisfied, he may appeal to the courts.

A criticism was made to the Commission that the Film Censorship Board has been politicized so that permitting sex or violence has become a matter of posturing as a political liberal or conservative. Currently, film policy is being discussed in Italy's Parliament, including tightening censorship on obscene material. The cry from producers is for new film credit, withdrawal of film aid to porno films and help against television, both foreign border and illegal local stations, which are showing up to 150 films a week and devastating Italian cinema box offices. RAI and government authorities are concerned because these stations syphon off television commercial advertising and attack RAI's monopoly base.

The Italian film industry is one of the largest in the world and is of considerable economic importance. It produces about 200 feature films a year, approximately 15 of which are all-Italian, the balance being co-productions. About 70 per cent of films shown are Italian. The industry is attempting to withhold films from the new wildcat regional commercial television stations, and has persuaded U.S. distributors to do the same. Italy is the largest market for U.S. films in Europe and second only to the Canadian market in the world. Despite economic difficulties, of recent years audience levels have stayed high at around 55 million a year. Attendance frequency rate is three times higher in Italy than in any other country in western Europe – it represents half of all tickets sold in the nine-nation European community. There are over 11,000 cinemas of all types.

Film Aid  
Policy  
(1965)

The Italian Society of Authors and Editors (SIAE) collects taxes from cinema box-office grosses. Government aid to films, which are considered to be an important manifestation of artistic expression, has been given since 1927,



the latest policy being devised in 1965. There are many types of aid, including a loan system through *La Banca Nazionale di Lavoro* for Italian-content films and an award to the producer of a share of box-office receipts. This automatic aid is supposed to be denied to sexploitation films. A quota system for cinema operators includes tax rebates based upon the percentage of quality Italian films exhibited, certificates and monetary prizes for quality films and grants for groups exhibiting Italian films, such as film festivals, film libraries and museums. While this program of financial aid to the film industry is one of the most generous and complete of any nation's, recent instability in the political and economic life of Italy has resulted in miring approvals for film aid in red tape. The industry is currently in a state of flux, and is demanding a new system of film aid to replace the 1965 policy.

Committee for  
New Film  
Policy  
(1977)

In 1977, the Minister of Tourism and Entertainment appointed a committee representing all elements of the Italian film industry to prepare proposals for a new film policy, bearing in mind Italy's economic condition of austerity.

There has existed for some time a public corporation for film production and promotion (EGC) *Ente Autonomo di Gestione per il Cinema* (Independent Film Institute) with three subsidiaries: *Cinecitta*, the largest studios in Europe, *Italnoleggio* for financing conventional productions and *Istituto Luce*, a specialized film production company making children's films and educational and scientific documentaries. The purpose of these institutions is to produce culturally positive films. The EGC was reactivated by the government in 1971 with a state subsidy of \$60 million for five years, under the Ministry for State Participation in Industry. A board of directors was appointed of film critics and experts representing several political parties, which resulted chiefly in political wrangling and stalemate. In the spring of 1976, the government appointed a special commissioner to take over, with a new financing pro-

posal to provide an annual grant of \$13 million for a five-year period. The proposal covered the establishment of two new autonomous agencies, one to provide promotion for export of all Italian films, private and public, to world markets, and another to take over some 30 existing cinemas, and buy up to about 100 more, to create a cinema circuit to exhibit films of cultural merit.

The purpose of EGC, beyond production of educational films and documentaries, is to give opportunity to young directors, provide places where non-commercial Italian films may be seen, and increase the quality of Italian-made films, thereby educating the public's taste.

To the comment that EGC-assisted films are sometimes criticized as containing violence, the special commissioner contends that such violence is purposeful in order to explain such phenomena as Fascism and Nazism (*The Night Porter* and *The Malleveti Murder*) and to contrast it with socially positive behaviour. The EGC does not finance "spaghetti westerns".

## The Press

There are only two Italian dailies with national circulation. Their readership is very low. Their numbers have dropped by more than 50 per cent in the past 25 years. Newspapers jealously guard their advertising revenue from inroads by RAI's television monopoly and by agreement have limited RAI's share to 5 per cent of its income. Newspapers receive governmental aid principally on the cost of newsprint. Some have political or church affiliation; more are owned by large industrial groupings. Italian newspapers do not make profits.

Newspapers do not make a profit because of low readership and because the government fixes the price for all dailies. Italian dailies together sell less than a quarter as much as their counterparts elsewhere in Europe and less than a fifth as much as British newspapers. They are kept afloat by support

Press Aid  
Policy

Constitutional Guarantee (1948)	from financial institutions, political parties, religious groups and groups of industrial enterprises, and sometimes by inflated contracts for advertising. Newspapers are, of course, subject to general laws such as the obscenity law, but are, by the Constitution, free of censorship.
Statutory Court of Honour (1959)	There is a Statutory Press Court of Honour (1959) for those complaining of breach of the code of ethics of the National Council of the Italian Press. A 1963 statute established the Italian Order of Journalists, classifying journalists as full- or part-time, in an attempt to raise professional standards. It is not very enthusiastically supported.

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the patient cooperation, information and advice offered during its consultations in Italy by:

(RAI) *Radio Televisione Italiana* (Italian Broadcasting Corporation)

Emanuele Santoro, Sr. Monte, Alvise Zorri, Jan Zaremba, Pompeo Abruzzini, Franco Ferracuti, Renato Lazzari

(EGC) *Ente Autonomo Gestione Cinema* (Italian Film Institute)

Ugo Niutta, Sr. Lancia

# The Netherlands

## Television

This nation of 13,500,000 people has developed a unique broadcasting system based upon its historical philosophy that anyone who has anything worthwhile to say should have the opportunity to do so. Since 1966, broadcasting has been run to a significant extent by the major confessional groups in Dutch society – Protestants, Catholics, Socialists, Liberals, et cetera – institutions whose previously assumed durability is now open to question.

*Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk* (the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Welfare) is responsible for approving the budget for broadcasting, including the fees for licensing broadcast associations entitled to air time; recommending for appointment by the *Raad van State* (Council of State) a government Commission for Broadcasting Affairs; and the promulgation of broadcasting regulation.

The government commissioner, an adviser to the Minister, is responsible for seeing that orders and regulations are observed by the broadcasting organizations. In cases of disagreement, there is an appeal to the Minister, who makes his decision after a hearing by the broadcast commission.

There is a standing committee of the *Staten-Generaal* (Parliament) that debates broadcasting upon the presentation of its budget, and in special debates arising from time to time.

(NOS) *Nederlandse Omroep Stichting* (Netherlands Broadcasting Corporation) is responsible for coordinating schedules of the various organizations and groups that produce most of its programs. It is responsible for management of studios and common technical services, for production and transmission of special regional broadcasts, and other broadcasts, including news and sport, educational and children's pro-

grams (in collaboration with the Netherlands School Television Association and the Television Academy). NOS produces about 40 per cent of the total radio and television programs. It broadcasts to the whole country over three home radio services: *Hilversum 1*, 2 and 3, and two television channels, which, since 1968, broadcast in colour using the PAL system. Aside from programs made by NOS itself, the balance (60 per cent) of broadcasts is prepared by independent programming organizations.

These organizations are allocated time and place in the broadcast schedule by the Minister, depending upon the number of people who support the particular organization (its "membership") as measured by the purchases of guides to its television schedule and by rating surveys on its programs. In addition, the Minister licenses other aspiring program groups (including regional groups) that have at least 15,000 members, for an initial period of one hour a week for two years, in which time the aspirant group may build an audience and the required membership of 100,000 to reach the status of a recognized organization. Licensed organizations may move up or down the classification scale depending upon membership support. Two years is given to re-establish support for an organization that loses members and thus drops a classification. The classifications are:

– an aspirant organization of 15,000 or more – one hour a week

C – 100,000 membership – two and a half hours television and radio time

B – 250,000 membership – five hours television and radio time

A – 400,000 membership – eight hours television and radio time

Dutch broadcasting time is limited to the evening hours and if too many organizations reach A ratings by attracting new audiences (not merely defectors from broadcasts of others), television broadcast time must expand.

Currently, the seven major broadcasting companies are:

Broadcast  
Mandate  
Supervision

Parliamentary  
Broadcasting  
Committee

(NOS)  
Netherlands  
Broadcasting  
(1966)

(AVRO) *Algemene Vereniging Radio – Omroep* (General Broadcasting Association) – Independent  
 (TROS) *Televisie Radio Omroep Stichting* (Television and Radio Broadcasting Foundation) – Independent

(The above two use many U.S. imports).

(VARA) *Omroepvereniging Vara* (Vara Broadcasting Corporation) – Socialist

(VPRO) *Omroepvereniging VPRO* (Radio and Television Company) – Liberal.

(KRO) *Katholieke Radio Omroep* (Catholic Broadcasting Society) – Catholic.

(NCRV) *Nederlandse Christelijke Radio Vereniging* (Netherlands Christian Radio Society) – Reformed Protestant.

(EO) *Evangelische Omroep* (Evangelical Society) – Evangelical.

Altogether, some 30 or more broadcast organizations share program responsibility, including that for two regional stations: (RONO) *Regionale Omroep Noord en Oost*, and (ROZ) *Regionale Omroep Zuid*, and a radio station broadcasting only religious services and music, *Radio Bloemendaal*.

A separate entity, *Radio Nederland Wereldomroep*, broadcasts abroad.

Policy Board

The board of NOS is comprised of 24 members. The broadcasting organizations appoint one-half; six are appointed upon nomination of cultural organizations and six, plus the chairman, are appointed by the *Raad van State*.

The whole system is financed by licence fees of \$44.46 for both black-and-white and colour sets, collected by the Post Office, plus advertising revenue. (STER) *Stichting Ether Reclame* (the Television and Radio Advertising Foundation) was set up by the government in 1968, to control commercial broadcast advertising. Commercial are limited to four- to five-minute clusters each day, before and after two newscasts on television and 24 minutes

per day on radio; they are never shown on Sunday or Christian holidays. No advertising is permitted that deals with smoking, violence or pornography.

Each broadcasting organization is required to produce a full range of program types and the NOS coordinating committee ensures balance. Each of the broadcasting companies receives a proportional share of the income from licence fees as well as some of the advertising revenue, but 40 per cent of the advertising revenue goes to the press, which shares according to circulation. This cross-media subsidy is being phased out.

All these non-profit programming companies rely heavily on imports, as their production budgets are limited. Public interest in informational and documentary programs has declined, and escapist entertainment programs are very popular. AVRO has been the most popular A-rated company, but its supporters are the older middle-class managerial group. TROS, which relatively recently rose to A rating, has appealed to a younger, more labour-oriented audience attracted to its light entertainment programming, including quizzes and films. (Recently TROS rearranged scheduled programs to include a pop group already scheduled by AVRO and earned a reprimand from NOS' Program Coordinating Committee). The other companies are now attempting to compete for audience support by emulating TROS' programs. A new word has been coined – "*Vertrossing*" – for this follow-the-leader-down-the-primrose-path process. One of the newest program aspirants is a former off-shore pirate radio station, *Veronica*, which is busily signing up members for similar entertainment programming. The deterioration of programming caused by the chase for audiences is causing debate in Parliament and the press.

Violence  
Research

NOS employs symphony orchestras and choirs. Research is undertaken by NOS – audience research, demographics and enjoyment indices, based on a



Border  
Spillover

rotating 1,500-member sample of the public. Research is also undertaken by political party groups, including projects on the effects of violent programming. Netherlands broadcasting faces competition from over-the-border German stations.

Impact of  
Television

## Film

As everywhere across Europe, cinema attendance figures have halved in the past 10 years in the Netherlands, but as a result of resurgence in feature-film making based upon recent government aid, audiences have now begun to appreciate Dutch films and attendance is on an upward trend. The Dutch have traditionally made excellent short films (now often appearing on television) and their animated films are attaining international standards. There is a Netherlands Film Academy whose graduates are helped to make experimental films by subsidies from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. The Ministry acts on advice given by the film department of the Arts Council. In 1975, 14 feature productions were released. Between 300 and 400 films are distributed each year to commercial cinemas and art houses.

Film Aid  
Policy

The Netherlands created a development fund for the film industry in 1956. The fund is subsidized by grants from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and by (NBB) *Nederlandsche Bioscoop Bond* (the Netherlands Cinema Association). The NBB is composed of professionals from every branch of the industry, and no production, distribution or exhibition can take place without its approval. *Nederlands Film Productie Fonds* (the Netherlands Film Production Board) is headed by a five-member management committee composed of two government appointees and three NBB members. Distributors must guarantee distribution before a producer may obtain assistance in the form of interest-free loans and guarantees. If a film is successful, it must pay back the loans plus 10 per cent; if unsuccessful, the loss is converted to a subsidy.

Constitutional  
Guarantee  
(1848)

There is no film censorship.

## The Press

Newspapers have circulated in the Netherlands since 1618. By an 1848 amendment to the Constitution: "No person shall require previous permission to publish ideas or sentiments by means of the press, without prejudice to every person's responsibility before the law." Netherlands law does not recognize the right of reply nor the journalist's right to protect his sources of information. There are 10 dailies circulating around this small country and over 100 provincial newspapers. Most are evening papers, with a wide circulation, of which a phenomenal 96 per cent is said to be by subscription. Perhaps for this reason, and because of the newspapers' family orientation, there is practically no sensational press. Most newspapers are independent, but reflect some political bias.

Press Aid  
(1972)

Newspapers have suffered from increasing costs and diminishing advertising revenue since the introduction of television in 1968. In 1971, the government established a fund to subsidize newspapers, which was increased in 1972. Forty per cent of television and radio advertising revenue is diverted to newspapers, based upon circulation.

Voluntary  
Press Council  
(1959)

A voluntary *Raad Voor de Journalistiek* (Council of Journalism) receives complaints of breaches of press ethics; its powers are limited to judgment of the merits of the complaint and publication.

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the patient cooperation, information and advice offered during its consultations in the Netherlands by:

(NOS) *Nederlandse Omroep Stichting* (Netherlands Broadcasting Corporation)  
Mr. van Os van den Abeelen

(VARA) *Omroepvereniging Vara* (Vara Television)  
Mr. Elkerbout

*(AVRO) Algemene Vereniging Radio-Omroep* (AVRO  
Television)  
Gerard Smit

*NRC Handelsblad* (New Rotterdam Business News)  
Frank Kuitenbrouwer

*PVDA* (Labour Party)  
Dr. Roethof

# Norway

## Television

(NKR)  
Norwegian  
Broadcasting  
(1933)

(NKR) *Norsk Rikskringkasting* (the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation), established in 1933, is an independent public body, subject to the *Stortinget* (Parliament) only for approval of its budget. It began telecasts in 1960. It carries no commercial advertising and finances all of its costs, both programming and facilities, television, radio and educational television, from licence fees on receivers (\$63.27 per household for black-and-white, and \$82.08 for colour) plus a purchase tax of 17 per cent on wholesale costs of radio and television receivers. This tax is collected by NKR, which is notified of such purchases by retailers. The licence fees go up about every three years and keep pace with rising costs. The licence fee is increased by Parliament, upon the advice of *Det Kirke-Og Underuisnings-Departement* (the Department of Church and Education). Planning projections indicate that the revenue base is adequate for financing until about 1985.

Servicing the whole population of four million across the mountains and fjords is costly – it has been said that Norway consists of “Oslo and stones”. The national radio network can be received by 100 per cent of the population, the national television channel by some 96 per cent. About half of the reception is by means of cable systems, privately owned by associations of building societies. Norwegians can also receive, on the east, Swedish television, which is largely understood by Norwegians, and on the south, Danish television, which is not. However, only 30 per cent of those who can receive Swedish television watch it. Radio school broadcasts, including language and music lessons, are received by some 2,500 educational institutions. There is a foreign-service radio broadcasting service. In keeping with Norwegian theatre tradition, there is a

large amount of radio drama broadcast. Radio service is broadcast 18 hours per day and has a very high listenership, although short-wave can bring in most of Europe. Twenty-five per cent of its programs must be in “new” Norwegian, a language founded 100 years ago, based on a west-coast local dialect.

Television broadcasts on one channel, and for limited times, less than 50 hours per week. The system used is PAL, and most of what is now broadcast is in colour. About half of the programs are domestically produced and the balance are purchased mainly from the U.K., or exchanged through Eurovision or Nordvision. English and Swedish programs are often run in their own languages, which are understood by much of the population, but other imports are subtitled. Dubbing is not used except for children’s programs designed for those under 12. Programming is noted for drama, with one play per week being offered all year. Much of this is made by NKR, supplemented by purchased material, both classics and contemporary drama. NKR employs a repertory company of 13 actors and two producers, supplemented by actors from the legitimate theatre. Only one film per week is shown and domestic films may not be shown until they are 10 years old.

Jazz concerts and ballet and opera are often filmed in live theatre performances. A long documentary on the life and work of Norwegian painter Edvard Munch was, at the time of the Commission’s visit, being shown in New York to critical acclaim, both as television and movie. An interesting program idea was *Idebanks* (Bank of Ideas), which presented problems in need of solutions and invited reactions from viewers. There was so much response that it overwhelmed the resources available and the program was dropped. Day-time programming largely consists of school broadcasts. It begins at 9:00 with a pre-school program; from 5 to 5:55, there is a repeat for shift workers; there is five minutes

Border  
Spillover

of news to 6:00, a children's program at 6:00 before the main news at 7:30 (40 minutes) and a further 10-minute newscast at the end of the broadcast day. There is a large specialized department for children's programming and a considerable number of sports programs are shown. News is exchanged through *Eurovision*.

Violent news incidents are often shown with only still photographs and a news reader, and, although there is no laid-down policy, NKR has developed its own in-house written rules respecting the depiction of violence; these are very strict and are carefully adhered to. These rules were produced by the staff and discussed with the advisory council. The company is very selective in purchasing foreign products and does not hesitate to cut, even news. Because Norway prohibits advertising of alcohol and cigarettes (cigarettes and smoking materials may not even be displayed in shop windows), no one (save in drama) may smoke on camera.

Average daily television viewing in Norway is one hour. No one has responsibility over NKR's programming, save the director-general and the staff. There is an advisory council comprised of 13 persons appointed by the government and 11 appointed by the *Stortinget* (Parliament), including two or three members of Parliament. Complaints may be received by this advisory council, which discusses programs ex post facto. The council meets twice a year, open to the press, while its committees meet monthly. NKR has experimented with public meetings with its viewers.

There is a new policy of decentralization whereby there are no open positions in NKR in Oslo, and three regional radio stations are to be converted to television studios for regional programming. There is a proposal for a new Broadcast Act to define the mandate, for objectivity and balance and respecting the goals of representation of Norwegian life. New methods of public access to broadcasting are being

sought.

Long-term planning for television, including budget and licence-fee levels, is carried out by the Department of Church and Education. It is currently studying the Nordik Satellite proposal. The population of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland (totaling some 22 to 23 million, about the size of Canada's population) could have eight, 10 or 11 channels in the future. To protect Norway from television cultural invasion, the department is also considering, on a short-term basis, development and financing of a longer program day. Norwegians start their working day at 8:00; have lunch at their desks at 11:00 a.m. and leave work at 3:45 p.m. In winter, it is dark at 4:00 p.m. The evening meal is usually at 5:00 p.m., after which Norwegians settle in front of their television sets.

In 1977 there is to be a conference in Geneva that will divide Europe into zones, establish broadcasting frequencies within the zones and assign those frequencies among the European nations.

The Commission was told of the determination of Iceland, while still a part of Denmark in 1940, and the efforts it made to protect itself from cultural invasion by television. The United States Air Force base located in Iceland set up its own television for American troops, but the broadcasts could be received all over Iceland. The government complained, but to no avail; then the Icelandic authorities simply jammed the broadcasts, isolating them to the base. Iceland has now gone even further and banned its own television for one day a week in order to encourage its citizens to do other things such as reading, visiting friends and participating in community activities.

There is a committee of NKR and the mass media department of *Univeritetet i Oslo* (University of Oslo). Its funds come from NKR, and it finances and coordinates projects advanced for media research, including NKR audi-



ence research and enjoyment index. It has funded a content analysis project underway at the University of Bergen's Sociology Institute. Its 1977 budget for research is one million kroner.

The Commission met with the noted Nils Christie, professor of criminology at the University of Oslo. He pointed out that Norwegians are a homogeneous people—indeed, many are related—and that violence is low in all Scandinavian countries except Finland. Norway is traditionally more oriented toward England and the United States, as maritime nations, than toward middle Europe. All Norwegians learn English from age 11.

Norway is not a member of the EEC. There was a referendum, supported by parties of the left and of the right, and by all the mass media, but the people voted against it, although it appeared that Norwegians would gain by it materially (this before the discovery of off-shore oil). The people outside of Oslo are more conservative, but all are independent. There is a very restrictive immigration policy.

Only 20 people out of four million are sentenced each year for murder (one-tenth the U.S. rate). There is no capital punishment. The prison population is one-eighth of Canada's and is the third smallest in the world, after Sweden and the Netherlands. Although Norwegians are hunters, there is no gun culture and police and prison authorities do not carry arms.

## Film

*The Statens Filmsentral* (Government Film Service), under the Ministry of Church and Education, coordinates film production commissioned by various government departments and serves as a central library for films.

Television's introduction affected both film production and cinema attendance in Norway as elsewhere. Attendance almost halved between 1960 and 1971, but appears to be stabilizing and even rising. Norway's population is scattered in

a country that is difficult to traverse. As there are no cinemas in some locations, a system of mobile cinemas was set up by private interests. Since 1950 they have been operated by the government, taking commercial films to the people. There are about 5,000 showings a year, with audiences of half a million. An operator with a projector sets up in local halls on Saturdays and Sundays, and screens the previously advertised film. The Government Film Service also produces and distributes a limited number of educational films for students and teachers. The system has been in operation for 30 years.

Norwegians like to see their own films. Of the 10 to 12 produced annually, usually one or two are among the most popular and 20 to 30 per cent of total box office is for these films, although some 300 to 350 films are distributed each year. Domestic films use familiar Norwegian actors who also appear on television and in the legitimate theatre, and they are the subject of many articles in Norwegian periodicals, magazines and newspapers. Some light comedies are made (*The Olsen Gang* films, originally created in Denmark from Norwegian short stories, are re-created in Norway from the Danish scripts). Imported films are subtitled, not dubbed.

There is little domestic money for investment in films since the advent of television. Every production thus has some element of government financing. This is done through the *Norsk Kino-Og Filmfond* (Norwegian Cinema and Film Foundation), which provides a government subsidy based on 55 per cent of box-office receipts; with loan guarantees, this can bring government aid up to 80 to 90 per cent of total cost. Since 1974, films of special merit may be given additional support on a selective basis.

*Norsk Film*, Norway's only fully equipped studio facility, is owned by the government (70 per cent) and the Municipal Cinema Association (30 per cent). It receives general parliamentary financial support plus special grants for

Film Aid  
Policy

Impact of  
Television

features and documentaries. It produces nearly half of Norway's films. *Norsk Filminstitutt* is a government film archive that operates an educational workshop in film.

A unique feature is that 80 per cent of the cinemas in Norway are owned by the municipalities, and have been since about 1913, when they were taken over. The profits derived from operation of the cinemas have been ploughed back into the arts. The famous Vogelund Sculpture Park in Oslo was financed, over a period of 30 years, from cinema profits. It was only in 1961 that film itself was recognized as an art. The other 20 per cent of cinemas are owned mainly by labour or other organizations. New cinemas are being built. An association of the municipal cinemas has its own import firm and does cooperative buying. Municipalities set their own admission prices. Importing companies, including that owned by the municipalities, pay for subtitling and must submit the films to the censorship office, although sometimes a synopsis of film script may be tendered before subtitling.

*Statens Filmkontroll* (the Board of Film Censors) is comprised of three people: a widely travelled woman member of the Norwegian Press Council, a sociologist and an academic. They are appointed for life. Both foreign and domestic films must be certified before showing. Films may be classified, cut or rejected. The divisions of classification are:

- suitable for anyone over 18
  - suitable for anyone between 16 and 18
  - suitable for anyone between seven and 12
  - suitable for anyone between five and seven, accompanied by an adult.
- The decisions of the board are final.

The censors must take into consideration that films must not be contrary to Norwegian law (pornography, blasphemy, obscenity); they must not violate feelings of decency; they must not be brutalizing; they must not have a morally degrading effect. Nothing

must be passed that could be harmful to children. There is no provision that special consideration be given to films of special artistic merit.

The three full-time censors consult two other part-time censors before making extensive cuts and call upon expert consultants as required.

Last year, 17 films, 10 per cent of those offered for adults, were rejected, including *The Manson Murders*, *Kung Fu* films (as in England and Sweden) and Pasolini's *The Last 120 Days of Sodom*.

Last year seven films were cut and then passed, including *Jaws*, *Taxi Driver*, and *La Grande Bouffe*. *The Exorcist* was passed uncured.

There was a six-month boycott of American films, based upon demands by American distributors for higher rental fees (see Sweden). The matter has now been settled.

## The Press

Norway is second, with Denmark and after Iceland, among the world's greatest per-capita publishers and readers of books. Formerly many books were translated from English for sale in Norway; however, knowledge of English is now so widespread that readers buy cheap paperbacks from England. Norway has 150 newspapers, including 80 dailies, a few of them very large. Three of Oslo's eight dailies have national readership. There are no Sunday papers. Most morning newspapers are sold by subscription. There are no large chains. Newspapers are mainly privately owned and many have party connections. Newspapers are generally quite serious and educational.

A government loan fund was set up in 1972, to render financial assistance to newspapers.

While the principle of press freedom is safeguarded by the Constitution, there is no specific press law. Responsible editors bear wide responsibility in law for the paper's content, especially in libel cases.

The Norwegian Press Association, comprised of professional organizations for journalists, editors and publishers, voluntarily established *Norsk Presseforbund* (Norwegian Press Council) in 1928. This was expanded in 1972. It is supported by all dailies and weeklies. The board is nominated and financed by the association. It numbers five journalists, an editor, plus two representatives of the public, at present a film censor and a priest, elected for two-year terms. Board members are unpaid.

Complaints are sent by letter to the Press Council, which passes them on to the responsible editor, who comments. In most cases, matters end with such correspondence, and if the verdict goes against the newspaper, it must publish a retraction or correction without further comment. Wire services carry the verdict. In 1972 there were 60 complaints; last year there were 130. The council does not deal with court matters, and cannot require a complainant to give up his right to sue for damages as for libel or invasion of privacy. The press council primarily deals with breaches of its published code of ethics.

There is an *Institutt for Presseforskning* (Press Research Institute) at the University of Oslo.

As a result of a 1974 parliamentary debate regarding possible harmful effects of comics, magazines and films, in 1976 the government set up a commission to report on violence and the mass media. It is asked to investigate legal techniques to control the exploitation of violence. The six members of the commission are publishers, lawyers, and Professor Anita Werner, a widely known mass media researcher. The commission is surveying laws and regulations to control media, particularly from European sources.

There appears to be no complaint with Norwegian television on the score of violence. Films and comics are the primary focus.

Professor Werner mentioned

#### Research

research that had previously been done on the short-term effects of violent comics and films on children.

She has, at the University of Oslo, been working on a study on the role of mass media in the socialization of youth. She has previously published *Children and Television in Norway*, a study of Norwegian communities before and after the introduction of television.

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the patient cooperation, information and advice offered during its consultations in Norway by:

*Statens Filmsentral* (Government Film Services)  
Mr. Fanavoll

*Statens Filmkontroll* (Board of Film Censors)  
Mrs. Skaug

*Norsk Presseforbund* (Norwegian Press Council)  
Hans Ihlebeck

*Institutt for Presseforskning* (Press Research Institute, University of Oslo)  
Anita Werner

*Institutt for Kriminologi og Strafferett* (Institute of Criminology, University of Oslo)  
Nils Christie

*Det Kirke-Og Undervisnings Departement*  
(Department of Church and Education)  
Enevald Skadsem

*(NKR) Norsk Rikskringkasting* (Norwegian Broadcasting)  
Otto Ness, Gerhard Knoop, Ada Haug

*Norsk Filminstitut* (Norwegian Film Institute)  
Jon Stenklev

# Poland

## Television

In the Polish People's Republic, one of two socialist states visited by the Commission, a new climate was encountered. It was explained that since the constitution of such a republic declares that all means of production are held by the State to ensure "continual improvements in the welfare, health and cultural level of the people", there is ingrained in all who work in the cultural sectors at least, an awareness that mass communication is to be used for the advancement, and not the detriment, of the people. That being the case, there is little formal direction from above, but a self-regulation approach toward all mass media as more educational, informative and cultural than entertaining, a state of affairs that automatically precludes a resort to exploitive violence.

*Polskie Radio i Telewizja* (Polish Radio and Television) is responsible for radio and television broadcasting. *Sejm* (Parliament) elects the members of the Council of State (Cabinet). The Prime Minister appoints a committee for broadcasting, made up of writers, scientists and social workers, which is responsible for the production and diffusion of programs – the transmitters and land lines being controlled by the Post and Telegraph Service. Appointments are at pleasure, without a definite term.

The broadcasting committee has promulgated a set of regulations. The president of the committee is a member of the Council of Ministers. There is a *Praesidium*, an executive body, and an advisory committee that meets occasionally.

Visiting Commission members were told,

There is no law preventing violence on television; it is the view of the top management of the committee on broadcasting. It is difficult to establish the origin of the decision

to make it that way; it is ideologically established: We are against violence on television and against violence generally.

Violence on television would not make most people violent, but a minority could be made more violent and this is enough for us – if only one person got killed or one woman got raped, that would be enough reason not to show violence, as far as we are concerned. Violent films don't have a negative impact on 99 per cent of the population, but they do have some influence.

By law, mass media may not criticize the system of government, disclose state secrets, damage international relations, induce violations of law and order, or publish inaccurate information. Broadcasting in this nation of more than 33 million people encompasses three radio networks and two television networks broadcasting in colour, using the SECAM system.

Television I (broadcasting since 1954) reaches 90 per cent of the population, is on-air from 8 to 10 a.m. with in-school broadcasts and repeats for shift workers, and then again from 4 to 11 p.m. for general programming, later on weekends.

Television II, broadcasting since 1970, reaches only half of the population and broadcasts only some 22 hours per week. Its programming is for special audiences; subject matter includes science, technology, fine arts including film masterpieces, experimental theatre and foreign languages.

Seven broadcasting centres outside central facilities in Warsaw provide up to an hour a day of local programming. Broadcasting is financed by a licence fee of 30 zlotys (\$1.50) per month and by advertising revenue, although it is reported that the latter revenue is used entirely for welfare services for *Polskie Radio's* employees. Advertisements are looked upon as a variety of information programming only, and no great attention appears to be given to the revenue generated.

(*Polskie Radio*)  
Polish  
Broadcasting

Policy  
Committee

Policy on  
Violence



East German, Soviet and Czech broadcasts are received off-air in Poland, but not every Pole understands these languages.

Films are made by *Polskie Radio*, which makes some 82 per cent of its own television and radio programming and exports through *Poltel*. Films are generally shown following theatrical release. These are dubbed and subtitled, or voice-over is employed, although films consisting of considerable conversation are usually dubbed, as are imported children's programs. This is done by a state-owned dubbing facility.

Foreign films and series are often rejected on grounds of an excess of sex and/or violence. A selection of series and episodes is purchased, and cuts are made if necessary, but the preference is to refuse to buy offensive material in the first place.

School programming for children and youth has been broadcast over the past 16 years. The schedule is published more than a year in advance and the programs are discussed in advance among teachers, editors and researchers. Programming covers 12 subject areas, and it brings to the classroom the benefits of audiovisual presentation. There are 10 to 14 programs per week (200 on radio) and 1,200 programs are broadcast a year, of which 80 per cent are for in-school use and 20 per cent for popular education. The Polish schoolday is from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and everyone must attend until age 15. One department deals with school-age children's programs and another with pre-schoolers. Videotapes of school programs are kept as a library. Technical education, including agricultural broadcasts for adults, and a television college for teachers, appears on Channel I and then is repeated on Channel II. These courses include examinations and certificates upon graduation.

Pre-schoolers' programs are broadcast at 3 p.m.; at 7:30, there is a children's "good-night" program, *Jacek and Agatha*; on Sundays at 9

a.m. and noon there is also programming for young children. The basic principle followed in pre-school programs is "to forget television as a movie at home and force the child to participate by arranging games." Programs such as *The Bravery Club* and *The Invisible Hand Club* have produced a response from up to a quarter million children. Cartoon characters from these programs are so popular they even appear on postage stamps.

Polish audiences have access to two major television news programs a day and some 30 on radio. There is fine drama, including the production of 140 plays a year, some of them children's plays, employing 1,000 people. There is extensive music on radio, and a total of four broadcast symphony orchestras. *Polskie Radio* commissions music and conducts script competitions. *Citizens Forum*, an open-line program where viewers confront politicians, is very popular.

The most highly developed broadcast research organization in Eastern Europe is that serving *Polskie Radio*. It conducts an average of 20 studies a year, and publishes summaries in English. The research centre analyzes mail, conducts inquiries into audience reaction, examines the impact of media on society and abstracts material from foreign sources. It has a large full-time staff (90) and employs 2,000 part-time workers to assist in interviews.

## Film

The control of production, distribution and exhibition of films – commercial, educational and newsreel – is vested in *Film Polskie* (Central Film Office), a government agency, under the authority of *Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki* (the Ministry of Culture and the Arts).

The total number of cinemas dropped by some 300 over a 10-year period, when audiences decreased by over 50 million with the advent of television, but audiences are now stabilizing and even increasing and new cinemas are being built. Annual production is now

Research

Impact of  
Television

about 20 to 25 films per year. Polish films are very popular among the Polish people. From 180 to 200 films are distributed annually. The State School of Film, Television and Theatre at Łódź (*Panstwowa Wyższa Szkoła Teatralna Filmowe*) is known for its creativity. Training is given to actors, directors and cameramen and it has produced an important pool of trained people for television, film and theatre.

There is an animation film studio that has produced an animated film serial, *Bolek and Lolek*; this has been a best seller, purchased by 80 countries, including Canada.

## The Press

The Polish press was nationalized in 1946, and remains under government control. The majority of newspapers and magazines are published by the Polish United Workers' Party.

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by the 1952 Constitution, yet it is subject to general control by administrative bodies. The government dictates general policy on what may appear. Daily newspapers readership is increasing. There are 10 dailies appearing six or seven times per week in Warsaw. There is a large periodical press.

There is no basic code of press ethics, but there is a Press Law, a set of regulations under which reporters and editors must operate. As explained to the Commission, post-censorship (the system whereby something published is actionable at law, either criminally or for damages to an individual) exists for the protection of persons in a capitalist state where ownership of mass media is private. But, where the means of production belong to the state, it is not permitted to make a mistake, or break the law or damage someone. Therefore, there is a system of prior censorship to ensure that such mistakes are not made. A point was made that the mere existence of the censor's office, which deals with print and film, creates a stronger self-censorship than that actually imposed by the acts of the

censorship officials. Every writer is free to write what he will. He then submits his material to the censor. If there is offensive material, a process of negotiation takes place between writer and censor, and the writer may call in a negotiator from the Association of Polish Writers. If the writer is dissatisfied with the censorship official's decision, he may appeal to the director and then on to the president, or to a special department in the Central Committee. The censor takes the responsibility for what appears, and the author is thus protected, although not from civil action by an aggrieved fellow citizen.

The censor must approve the import of books. Violent or obscene books may not be imported. These are defined and proscribed by law.

Bookstores are owned by the state. No pornography is permitted.

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the patient cooperation, information and advice offered during its consultations in Poland by:

*Polish Radio and Television Committee*  
J. Wilhelm

*Polskie Radio i Telewizja* (Polish Broadcasting)  
Sergiusz Mikulicz, J. Fuksiewicz, J. Kunicki, M. Ziminski, Albin Kanina, W.T. Pickarski.

*Press Censor*  
Mr. Ratajski

*Magazine Film*  
Jan Olszewski

Constitutional  
Guarantee  
(1952)

Press Law

# Sweden

Responsible  
Editor

## Television

(SR)  
Swedish  
Broadcasting  
Corporation

Sweden's broadcasting system is unique, in that two competing channels operate within one monopoly company (SR) *Sveriges Radio A.B.* (the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation). SR is an independent public company which, by agreement with the government, holds a broadcasting monopoly. The share capital of the company is held by community organizations, industry and commerce, press organizations and individual newspapers. It is governed by a board of which six members, including the chairman, are government appointees: five represent the shareholders and two represent staff. The agreement was to expire in June, 1977, but has been extended one year because of the 1976 election.

Policy Board

Programming for both radio and television is financed from licence fees – currently \$54.72 for black-and-white sets and \$78.66 for colour television. These are among the highest fees in Europe. They are collected by the central administration of *Televerket* (Swedish Telecommunications) and put into a fund. SR has to apply to *Utbildnings-Departementet* (the Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs) each year for its budget. Broadcast advertising is not permitted, although from time to time there has been pressure to allow it. A committee of inquiry of the *Riksdag* (Parliament) studied the possibilities of introducing commercials over a seven-year period in the 1960s, but ultimately rejected it. Educational and external broadcasts are financed from public funds, voted separately by the *Riksdag*.

Mandate  
Supervision

The Broadcasting Act requires the broadcasting service to be impartial and objective and to satisfy a broad range of tastes. For complaints on broadcasting, *Radionamnden* (Broadcasting Council), an independent body of seven members appointed by the government, operates as a public ombudsman.

There are seven virtually autonomous divisions within *Sveriges Radio*: radio, TV1, TV2, the joint news office, educational broadcasting, external broadcasting and regional broadcasting. The director-general has no responsibilities regarding programming, save to see that law and policy are adhered to. The director-general and the seven heads of program divisions are appointed by the board. Each chief program editor is legally liable for the content of his programs. The two television divisions receive equal program budgets because they broadcast equal numbers of hours. There are a number of joint services: the news department, foreign purchasing, technical services and the *Sveriges Radio* Symphony Orchestra.

Radio broadcasting in Sweden began in 1923. There are three national radio services.

Experimental telecasts began in Sweden in 1954, regular programming on one channel in 1956; a second channel began in 1969 and colour broadcasts utilizing the PAL system were initiated in 1970. The two channels have the same mandate and are intended to compete, although not for revenue purposes – they receive identical budgets.

There is coordination of programming to ensure alternative viewing. The introduction of the second channel did not increase viewing, which is much heavier in the long winter months than in the summer. Nor did programming become less serious in nature. Sweden has the second highest per-capita ownership of television sets in the world, after the U.S. Educational programs are transmitted in daytime hours and general programming in late afternoon and evenings and on weekends.

TV1 carries a large share of programs about religion, science and nature, music, arts and literature, while TV2 carries more about political and social issues, and feature films.

TV1 Violence  
Policy

TV1's attitude to violence:

It is imperative that television programs foster humanitarian ideals by showing respect for the worth of human life and by avoiding needless brutality. While the final conclusive research findings on the effects of violence are not in, TV1 feels that to use violence as a form of entertainment is too great a risk to take. It is also the purpose of TV1 to try to foster an atmosphere where intolerance and prejudice would have no part.

TV2 Violence  
Policy

TV2's policy on violence:

Those documentaries that necessarily include violence should show it in its social and human context. In those cases where violence is present in non-documentary programs, its motives and consequences must be made explicitly clear. Violence is not to be used as a diversion or as a means to attract a larger audience.

Swedish television fare is conceded to be the least violent in the world. A considerable amount of its programming is repeated. Because it is required to produce 60 per cent of its programs, documentaries mainly, it can't afford to do light entertainment. Such programs are purchased from abroad, mainly from the U.K. This material is subtitled, not dubbed. SR often is granted rights to cut. SR buys only one out of 20 hours offered, rejecting most because of violent content.

Of the programming produced in Sweden, 27 per cent is produced by the regions. At present only 48 per cent of programming is produced in Sweden; the official goal is to have two-thirds Swedish-produced and one-third imported programming. The broadcast day starts with school broadcasts during the morning, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 or 2:00 p.m. These broadcasts are generally recorded by regional audiovisual centres, and stored for later school use; the educational television schedule is published six or seven months in advance to assist teachers. Programs for pre-schoolers begin the regular

broadcast day at 4:30 on TV2 and at 5:30 on TV1. There are about 90 to 100 broadcast hours per week. A talk show is scheduled in prime time (6:30 to 7:30 p.m.) for phoned-in viewer complaints (Sweden has a very high proportion of private telephones and the broadcast licence fees are added to the telephone bill). Other special programs include a television series of 12 one-hour programs dealing with viewers' letters. Every viewer's letter is answered meticulously; two conferences with regional viewers are arranged each year; programs on how to understand mass media for both children and adults are offered. All this gives Swedish viewers a sense that their broadcasting system is responsive. Eighty per cent of Swedes are in bed at 10:00 p.m., when the program day usually ends.

Boxing matches are banned from television and virtually no western or crime shows are aired. Sports programs are very popular. The Commission's visit coincided with the Canada-Sweden hockey series of 1976; most Swedes stayed awake until 4:30 a.m. to watch the game.

*Sveriges Radio* has a respected research department, which does both program and audience research. Particularly active is Cecelia von Feilitzen, who, in 1975, published a survey of Scandinavian research on television effects on children in particular. Mass media are currently subject to intensive investigation and review in Sweden.

The Mass Media Committee reported in 1975. It recommended that statutes that have hitherto regulated mass media be merged into a single law, a sort of mass media constitution. Freedom of the press is protected by the Constitution, but its provisions do not expressly extend to broadcasting.

A new press commission (the third in 10 years) was appointed in 1972 and reported in 1975.

Swedish broadcasting has a regional radio broadcasting division consisting of 11 districts covering the whole coun-

Research

Mass Media  
Committee  
(1975)

Press  
Commission  
(1975)



try. The 1969 Broadcasting Committee recommended, in 1973, a new structure with one local radio station in each of two broadcasting areas. The parliamentary committee recommended a wholly independent company for local radio, but Parliament passed a bill making local broadcasting a subsidiary of SR.

Educational  
Broadcasting  
(1976)

(TRU) *Kommitten för TV och Radio i Utbildningen* (the Committee for Educational Broadcasting) under the Ministry of Education has been, since 1967, conducting experiments and research and developing programs that have been regularly shown on SR. This committee recommended that there be a separate company to produce educational radio and television programs, ranging from pre-school to adult. These programs would still have to be broadcast by SR unless and until a fourth radio, and a third television channel are launched, or unless an independent broadcast authority is set up. At the end of 1976, it was announced that a "daughter" organization to SR is to be established, incorporating TRU and the educational television department of SR, to begin operation January 1, 1978, as Educational Radio Sweden.

Parliamentary  
Broadcast  
Committee  
(1974-77)

In 1974 *Års Radioutredning*, a parliamentary committee, set to work to develop broadcast policy for radio and television for a new 10-year contract period, 1977 to 1987, for SR. The committee's chairman is the chancellor of the University of Sweden and its members are members of the *Riksdag* (Parliament), representing all parties. It was to report in early 1977. The present agreement with SR, which expires at the end of June, 1977, has now been extended to 1978. The committee's terms of reference are extensive, but the Ministry of Education has laid down the principles that the system is to continue to be free of commercials, and to be free of government and special-interest pressure. The problem to be resolved is how to strengthen public influence without infringing upon the independence of program-

SR's in-house  
study  
(1976)

Save the  
Children  
Campaign

Hadenius  
Commission  
1976

Nordic Council  
Committee

mers. One way being considered is the introduction of regional advisory bodies.

In order to provide information for the parliamentary committee on how the unique system of two competing channels under one management has operated, *Sveriges Radio* undertook a massive in-house review that was published early in 1976 in nine volumes.

The Commission also met with several Swedes involved in *Rädda Barnen Riksförbund* (Save the Children Campaign), pressing for the establishment of a children's advisory committee, independent of SR, which would screen all programming to protect children's rights. Associated with it would be continuous monitoring, with published results to inform parents. The Commission visited an elaborate display mounted by the group at the University of Stockholm. Two hundred such exhibits are being circulated and the group is attempting to engage international support.

Stig Hadenius is a one-man commission, charged with making proposals to Parliament for future communications research. He is secretary to the Press Council and a university professor.

There is a Committee of the Nordic Council on Mass Media Research, which holds conferences every other year at which Scandinavian researchers exchange information. This has led to the establishment of a *Nordisk Institutet* (Nordic Research Institute) at Arrhus, Denmark.

Mass media research ranging from the study of election reportage to examination of newspapers, including content analysis, is undertaken by *Statsvetenskapliga Institutet* (the Institute of Political Science) at Göteborg University, *Sociologiska Institutet* (the Institute of Sociology) at Lund University (media use and media systems), and other universities, as well as by the Audience Research Section at *Sveriges Radio*. There is also a Swedish Office of Future Studies, which has a committee for long-term research. This office hosted a symposium in 1974, and is

Tricentenary  
Fund  
(1968)

now publishing its report, *Man in the Communications Systems of the Future*.

*Sveriges Riksbank* (the Bank of Sweden), like the Bank of Canada a publicly owned central bank, is one of the oldest such banks in the world. It was 300 years old in 1968, when, as a birthday gift to the people of Sweden, it set up a research foundation, *Pris i Ekonomisk Vetenskap till Alfred Nobles Minne* (the Alfred Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Science) with a fund of 700 million kr. Half of the members of the board of this tricentenary fund are members of Parliament. The foundation is identifying priorities for research, one group looking into Man and Communication Technology, and one into Man and his Working Life. The former group is dividing areas of concern for projected research into man's reception and use of information, the development of media technology, and communications and democracy. The research design is to be completed by 1978, with research to be undertaken in the 1980s.

## Film

The Swedish film industry began about 1910. It was producing up to 30 films annually in the 1950s, but was seriously affected by the advent of television. Annual production dropped to 15 by 1961. When the Film Industry Cooperation Commission reported in 1962 and 1963, the government entered into an agreement with representatives of the industry to give it encouragement by setting up the *Svenska Filminstitutet* (Swedish Film Institute) and by providing relief from entertainment tax. This agreement was drawn for two years, but is subject to renewal and review. This aid policy, together with increased co-production, has now doubled annual film production. Several Swedish actors and directors have world-wide reputations, and Swedish films are the most popular with Swedish audiences. Nonetheless, cinema audiences have dropped to less than half the 1960 total of 50 million (in a

The Swedish  
Film Institute  
(1963)

country of eight million population) and a thousand cinemas have closed.

In 1963, the entertainment tax on cinema admissions was cancelled. It was replaced by a levy of 10 per cent of gross box-office receipts, to be used to finance the Swedish Film Institute to foster development of Swedish films and to finance a number of non-commercial film activities. There is a board of three to five persons appointed by the government, as is the director, and an advisory board of 30 to 40 persons appointed by the film industry, which chooses the Quality Awards Jury. The funds of the Film Institute are divided as follows:

10 per cent to quality grants for feature films;

15 per cent for automatic productions loans and guarantees;

30 per cent for selective production loans and guarantees;

5 per cent for promotion of Swedish films at home and abroad;

10 per cent for the Institute's own productions, features and shorts;

30 per cent for administration and non-commercial activities such as the *Cinémathèque* (a stills and clippings archive), a film archive, film clubs and children's film clubs.

The Institute makes half of all Swedish films. There was a State Film Commission appointed in 1968, which reported in 1973. As a result of its recommendations, there has been a gradual transition from automatic post-production financial support of quality films to selective pre-production support. This is administered by two funding boards that are independent of the Institute, one dominated by the film industry and the other by film workers.

The Institute also receives parliamentary grants to establish a fund for co-production with *Sveriges Radio* of feature films for exhibition on television and in cinemas.

About half of the Swedish film industry is privately financed. *Europa Film* produces film, distributes it, operates a film lab, a recording studio, a dubbing studio, a matrix department,

Film  
Commission  
(1968-73)

The Private  
Sector

Film Aid  
Policy  
(1963)

Impact of  
Television

facilities for record plating and tape duplicating, and a chain of 70 cinemas.

*Svensk Filmindustri A.B.*, said to be the oldest film company in the world and the most powerful of Sweden's production and distribution companies, produces expensive, high-quality children's films made from the books of Astrid Lindgren. These are the closest competition to Disney films around the world. The series of *Pippi*

*Longstocking* films has been sold worldwide, even as television segments.

The relationship between production, distribution and exhibition has always existed in Sweden and is thought to be necessary in such a small market. Swedish films are made for the domestic market. There is no attempt to compete with large-scale, expensive foreign extravaganzas. Swedish films are deliberately designed to appeal to a highly selective public with artistic interests and many have thus found world acceptance.

During the summer of 1976, Swedish cinema owners were boycotting American films. American film distributors had demanded a 20 per cent increase in rental fees. Although U.S. films form 60 per cent of those exhibited in Sweden, the cinema owners refused to accept the increase. The Swedish anti-trust authorities outlawed the distributors' action and instructed settlement. A compromise was reached after six months.

Freedom of the press has been guaranteed by the Swedish constitution since 1809. Censorship of the legitimate theatre was abolished in 1872. In 1911, film censorship was introduced to Sweden. In 1964, a government commission was appointed to study film censorship and to recommend whether it should be abolished.

Under the guidance of the Swedish Film Institute, it commissioned extensive research (12 projects) on the impact of film on its audience. This research has been vigorously attacked for its methodology and is rarely referred to now in Europe, or even in Sweden. The commission reported in

Film  
Censorship  
Board  
(1911)

1969, recommending that film censorship for adults be abolished. The recommendation was not adopted.

Film censorship is fairly liberally applied – at least in sexual matters but not with respect to the depiction of violence. The censor's office is known as *Statens Biograf Byrå* (the State Biograph Bureau) and is composed of four permanent censors. The material considered for bans or cuts is films or sequences that are "coarsening or harmfully exciting". The board is also required, under legislation of general application, to take action against films regarded as incitement to crime, or as harmful to Sweden's relations with a foreign power. The latter two categories have not recently been resorted to. The test of "coarsening or harmfully exciting" has been applied differently at different times, but it is clear that, in the 1970s, it is applied where so-called entertainment violence is felt to dehumanize the audience. Every film intended for public exhibition is required by law to be reviewed first by the censors, who then classify it as follows:

White – banned;

Yellow – suitable for audiences of 15 or over;

Green – suitable for audiences of 11 or over;

Red – general exhibition, suitable for audiences of all ages.

If the censors wish to ban a film or to cut a significant portion, or to cut a film of artistic merit that is likely to win, or has won, an award, they must first consult the State Film Review Council, but they are not bound to follow its recommendations. This council was established as an advisory body in 1954, and its chairman is a member of Parliament, its 10 members being writers and journalists. There is another advisory body, established in 1972, for children's films; its advice is always followed. Its 10 members are writers of children's books, a psychologist, a psychiatrist and other experts. The woman who chairs the group is a member of Parliament. These boards meet at the

Constitutional  
Guarantee  
(1809)

Film  
Censorship  
Commission  
(1964-69)

Advisory  
Boards

call of the full-time censors.

Kung Fu films have been wholly banned or radically cut and fistfights and gunfights are cut. No film may be cut because a censor finds it worthless and badly made – so that taste censorship is not permitted. If the film distributor is dissatisfied, he may appeal to the Minister of Education.

The censor's responsibility extends to all films for public exhibition, to cinema trailers and promotional materials including advertisements. It does not extend to films or trailers for television, and there is now no liaison with SR to ensure that uncut films are not shown. It has no control over newspaper advertisements because of the constitutional protection of the print press. Unsuccessful attempts have been made to lower classification ages to seven and to increase them to 18. At this time, there does not appear to be strong public or parliamentary sentiment to do away with film censorship for adults, although the post-election (September 1976) Minister for Cultural Affairs has been reported to be opposed to any censorship of the arts.

## The Press

The press has also been under serious study in Sweden for the past decade. Swedes are the world's most devout newspaper readers. Nonetheless, the number of newspapers has greatly declined since 1950, because of increasing concentration of ownership. Paradoxically, readership is increasing. The government has commissioned three major studies within nine years to find ways and means of maintaining and encouraging the free formation of public opinion. Many newspapers are owned by, or associated with, political parties or trade unions. There is a strong provincial press and Stockholm evening papers have near-national distribution.

The first press commission of 1963 led to a program of awarding government subsidies to political parties. Some political parties used these sub-

sidies to strengthen their newspapers. Some did not.

A second inquiry was commissioned in 1967 and reported swiftly in 1968. It recommended setting up a loan fund. *Presstödet* (the Press Support Fund) went into operation in 1969. These loans may be used for investments in buildings and machinery, for marketing or for distribution. Two years later, Parliament increased press aid by providing subsidies to the number two, or runner-up, newspaper in each area, at a fixed rate based on tons of newsprint for its editorial (but not advertising) space. At the same time, a tax on newspaper advertising was introduced. The subsidies to the press were raised in 1972. A third government commission was appointed in 1972; in 1974 it recommended further increases in direct government subsidies.

The Mass Media Committee also reported in 1975, calling for unified legislation for broadcasting, films and the press, to extend constitutional safeguards for freedom of expression to all media in accord with the basic principles of the 1949 *Års Tryckfrinets-förordning* (Freedom of the Press Act, 1949). It was further recommended that for prosecutions for its breach, the jury system be abandoned in favour of a single Freedom of Expression Court dominated by lay members. The recommendations were to be implemented in 1977, but action was suspended by the 1976 election, which occurred during the Commission's visit.

Press freedom in Sweden dates from 1766. It is embodied currently in the 1949 Act, which guarantees the right to print and disseminate ideas, protects journalists' sources of information, authorizes that public documents be publicly available (except for official secrets) and contains provisions for recourse in the event of defamation.

Each newspaper is required to register the person who will be held responsible for breaches of the Act. Swedes still consider newspapers to be their most important source of news. News-

Appeal

Press  
Commission  
(1967-1968)

Press Aid  
Support Fund  
(1969)

Press  
Commission  
(1972-1974)

Mass Media  
Committee  
(1975)

Press Act  
(1949)

Constitutional  
Guarantee  
(1766)

Responsible  
Editor

Press  
Commission  
(1963)



papers are exempt from value-added tax.

There is also a *Presstödsnämnden* (Periodical Support Fund). As of January 1, 1976, press trade unions have had a right to be consulted on senior management appointments (similar to the legislation in Yugoslavia).

*Expressen*, the largest Swedish newspaper, an evening tabloid, publishes a television supplement and has a telephone hotline for public comment on television. Although it has no written directive, there is an informal policy not to show violence on the front page. The Commission was advised that there may be criminal prosecutions against violence in hockey. *Expressen* does in-house research on comics, sports and special departments. There is a letters-to-the-editor page, but the editor of the editorial page has no part in selection of letters to be published. Although *Expressen* is often fined by the Ombudsman, it is felt that cooperating voluntarily with such an office is a means of preserving freedom and not of eroding it.

In 1916, the *Pressens Opinionsnämnd*, a voluntary Press Council, was set up by *Tidnings-Utgivare Föreningen* (the Association of Newspaper Publishers), *Journalistförbundet* (the Union of Journalists) and *Publicistklubben* (the Swedish Publicists' Club). The council does not include the periodical press. Its purpose is to maintain press ethics and to provide an opportunity for the public to make complaints. (A complainant may also sue for damages or prosecute as a criminal matter. A jury is then required.) The code of ethics has been revised, most recently in 1974. All daily and major weekly papers support the Press Council and *Sveriges Radio* has also undertaken to be bound by the code of ethics.

The office of *Pressombudsman* was created in 1969. All complaints now are initially directed to this office, the only one of its kind in the world. The *Pressombudsman* may also initiate action, but needs the consent of the complainant to do so. The service does

not cost anything, because the office is financed from fines paid by offending publications, as well as by support from the Newspaper Publishers' Association. The Ombudsman does not hold hearings and operates by telephone and mail. Frivolous complaints are dealt with summarily.

A complainant must first seek his right of reply from the offending publication. Minor matters are handled by negotiation between the *Pressombudsman* and the offending publication through its registered responsible editor. If rebuked, the publication prints a correction or retraction, which may be printed by other newspapers as well. Almost all have agreed by written contract to do so. This complaint procedure is available only to individuals and not to corporations. In more serious matters, if the newspaper refuses to accept the *Pressombudsman's* opinion, the matter is referred to the Press Council. If the decision is upheld, the publication pays a fine of approximately \$750, and publishes the admonition and correction. Decisions are also printed in a monthly gazette and often are included in broadcast newscasts.

#### Right of Reply

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the patient cooperation, information and advice offered during its consultation in Sweden by:

*Sveriges Radio* (Swedish Broadcasting)

Otto Norden-Skiold, Kaikan Unsgaard, Goran Dahlin, Herbert Soderstrom, Karin Wilhelmson, Olle Berglund, Ingrid Edstrom, Rolf Lundgren, Cecelia von Feilitzen, Leni Filipson, Ingegerd Rydin and Ingela Schyiller

*Radionämnden* (Broadcasting Council)

Bengt Wieslander, Erik Essen, Roland Nordlune

*1974 Års Radioutredning* (Parliamentary Broadcasting Committee)

Lars Göransson, Hack Kampman

*(TRU) Kommittén för TV och Radio i Utbildningen* (Committee for Educational Broadcasting)

Lars Erik Amling, Stig Linde, Sten-Åke Pettersen

Swedish  
Press  
Council  
(1916)

Press  
Ombudsman  
(1969)

*Rädda Barnensriksförbund* (Save the Children Campaign)  
Mrs. Fenno, Mrs. Rigmor von Euler, Åke Edfeldt,  
Mr. Johansson

*Pris i Ekonomisk Vetenskap till Alfred Nobles*  
*Minne Sveriges Riksbank* (Tricentenary Fund,  
Bank of Sweden)  
Bjorn Fjaestad

*Statsventen Skapliga Institutet* (Institute of Political Science, Göteborg University)  
Lennart Weibull, Rutger Windahl and Stig Hadenius

*Sociologiska Institutet* (Institute of Sociology)  
Lund University  
Karl Erik Rosengren, Swen Windahl

*Svenska Filminstitutet* (Swedish Film Institute)  
Harry Schein

*Svensk Filmindustri a.b.* (Swedish Films Ltd.)  
Ole Hellbour, Olle Nordemer, Kenne Fant

*Statens Biograph Byrå* (Biograph Bureau or Film Censorship Board)  
Gustaf Lindenbaum, Arne Svenson, Harry Kullman, Ann-mari Arnell, Åke Edfeldt

*Expressen* (*The Express*)  
Olle Petrini

*Pressombudsman* (Press Ombudsman)  
Lennart Groll, Margareta Arve

# Switzerland

## Television

This nation of seven million rejoices in four official languages – German, French, Italian and Romansch. Its Constitution dates back to 1874. The federal government's jurisdiction over radio and television derives from Article 36, Paragraph One which states: "Posts and telegraphs throughout the whole of the Confederation shall be the responsibility of the federal authorities." The general view is that Article 36 gives federal authorities jurisdiction only in respect of the technical operation of the transmitters, but not in respect of radio and television programs. A first attempt to add an Article 36 *bis* to the Constitution, giving federal authorities jurisdiction for programs, was rejected by voters and cantons in a referendum on March 3, 1957. A new Article 36 *quater* was proposed by the Federal Council on November 21, 1973 and ratified by the Assembly on March 19, 1976. While it had not been presented to the public at the time of the Commission's consultations, it was subsequently rejected in September, 1976, leaving the issue of jurisdictional competence in programming unchanged.

(SSR/SG) *Société Suisse de Radio-diffusion et Télévision/ Schweizerische Radio-und Fernsehgesellschaft* (the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation), founded in 1931 and renamed in 1960, is a monopoly body licensed to broadcast radio and television programs. It is a private company organized as an association under the Swiss Civil Code.

In 1971 SSR, because of its enormous growth, undertook a restructuring of the system. The aim of reorganization was to create "a rationally directed, dynamic undertaking aligned to optimum programming, both in quality and quantity." The salient features of the reorganization were a region-oriented structure, combining radio and television under the same manage-

Mandate  
Supervision

ment in each region; continued development of the director-general's leadership potential in conjunction with related groups; and strengthening of regional managements.

Both the program institution and the parent organization are under continual assessment to ensure fulfilment of the broadcasting mandate.

SSR is responsible for radio and television programs while the (PPT) *L'Entreprise des Postes, Téléphones et Télégraphes Suisses* (Swiss Post, Telephone and Telegraph) is responsible for all technical facilities.

The licensing authority is *Le Conseil Fédéral* (the Swiss Federal Council, or Cabinet) and the supervisory authority is the federal *Ministère de la Communication et de l'Énergie* (Ministry of Communications and Energy).

Radio and television are financed from 70 per cent of the licence fees collected, with 30 per cent being paid over to the PPT. Television receiver fees are \$49.59 for both black-and-white and colour sets. There is no commercial advertising permitted on radio, but direct advertising has been allowed on television since 1965. It is limited to 20 minutes on weekdays and the net revenue from such advertising goes exclusively to television. Advertising must be distinct from programs, and commercials for alcohol, tobacco and drugs are prohibited. *La Société Anonyme pour la Publicité à la Télévision* (Television Advertising Ltd.) is responsible for this aspect of programming.

About half of all programs are telecast in colour using the PAL system, which was chosen in 1967. SSR consists of three regional organizations, each representing one of the major linguistic areas. Romansch broadcasts are provided by the German-language service. Each of the three regional services broadcasts two domestic radio "programs", the first being of general interest and the second cultural and musical programs. Joint programs for all language services are broadcast on both television and radio networks. SSR also broadcasts three television chan-

(SSR/SG)  
Swiss  
Broadcasting  
Corporation  
(1931)

nels in the official languages. The three program organizations are: *Société de Radiodiffusion et de Télévision de la Suisse Romande* (French) at Lausanne; *Radio-und Fernsehgesellschaft der Deutschen und der Rato-Romanischen Schweiz* (Romansch and German) at Basle, and *Società Cooperativa per la Radiotelevisione Nella Svozzera Italiana* (Italian) at Luzano.

These three program their own networks, radio and television, under the director-general of the SSR. He is assisted by a widely representative Assemblée Générale (General Assembly) with whom he meets on a monthly basis. The assembly consists of 103 persons appointed to represent regional interests; *Le Comité Centrale* (the Central Committee) functions as the board of directors. The federal Cabinet names the chairman of the committee and seven members (with three alternates), and the regions name nine members and their alternates. This 17-member body appoints the director-general, who is responsible for programming. To assist him he is provided with a general directive. The central committee publishes general and specific directives, including one on handling of news, which draws attention to the code of ethics and breaches of it in relation to official secrets, invasion of privacy, et cetera.

Broadcasting is independent. The underlying principle is that broadcasting is based on a grant for public service and, while it must be free from any political, economic or other group pressure, it must nonetheless be ever accountable to the society it serves. It must respect the constitutional principles of liberty, democracy, federalism and the Swiss law. Its programs must reflect the values, traditions, political and religious ideals of the various national groups. Its overall mandate requires that it ban any program that might give rise to prejudice, intolerance, violence or hatred. Self-regulation is not perceived as an individual, but as a collective, responsibility among the component individuals and

groups within the hierarchy of the organization, from the individual announcer to the director-general. Thus, freedom of expression is based fundamentally on institutional responsibility without excluding individual responsibility.

Its mandate requires the SSR in its broadcast programs to "defend and develop the cultural values of the nation and contribute to spiritual, moral, religious, civic and artistic education." Its newscasts must be as objective, extensive, balanced and prompt as possible. Thus, freedom of expression is founded on journalistic ethics and the public interest. Its public responsibility is:

guided by morality, honesty, the search for truth and respect for the audience. It requires programming that evinces good taste, without necessarily limiting the choice of subject matter. In principle, no subject matter is prohibited. The important thing is to be able to treat any subject with tact, balance and within acceptable limits. There must be no blurring of issues, and objectivity demands that differing opinions be presented.

News is seen as a particularly delicate area of programming because of a disproportionate emphasis on negative and catastrophic events. While major newscasts are now of 15 minutes duration, it is anticipated that a half-hour format will be introduced in the near future, together with commentary on the news. The latter aspect is seen as an imperative for public education but is predicated on the availability of mature professional journalists. Because Swiss law does not provide for the right of reply in any of the mass media, Swiss broadcasters confine themselves to reporting facts, not opinions.

In 1972, the director-general and the board of directors of the television services of SSR commissioned an overview of research undertaken elsewhere in Europe and North America respecting the perceived increase in violence

Policy Board

Violence Policy

Violence  
Survey  
(1972)



and sexuality in society, with a view to ascertaining whether SSR's policy was appropriate. That report of November, 1972, surveyed:

- a) the report of the Eisenhower Commission (U.S.) of 1968-69;
- b) the study *Violence and the Mass Media* published by Otto Larsen, of the University of Washington;
- c) the report *Television and Delinquency* (known as the Halloran report), published by the University of Leicester, as a result of the U.K. broadcasting studies of 1963, 1969 and 1970;
- d) reports of the seminar on the subject at Cologne conducted by (WDR) *West Deutsch Rundfunk*, June 12 to 13, 1972;
- e) a study done for RAI, Italy, *Violence in Mass Communications*, by Ferracuti and Lazzari.

As a result of the survey, a directive on the responsibility of producers to be sensitive to the depiction of violence was published and attention drawn to the suitability of material to be shown up until 5 p.m., when children are watching alone; up to 9 p.m., when they are largely watching with their families; and after 9 p.m., when only an adult population need be considered.

The SSR has, from its beginning, conducted research on audience structure, conditions of broadcast reception, and listener and viewer habits. Comparisons are made between various language regions and between radio and television audiences. The public reaction to general programs, time preferences, specific types of programs and target groups (children and the elderly) is also part of the research.

Cable networks, owned privately or by local authorities, bring in television broadcasts from France, Germany and Austria.

## Film

*La Ministère de l'Intérieur* (the Department of the Interior) provides financial aid and encouragement to the film

Impact of  
Television

Film Aid  
Policy

industry, which is a small domestic industry in Switzerland. Switzerland averages four to five feature films per year, including co-productions, but in 1974 produced more than 18. Over the past 10 years, cinema audiences have declined by 25 per cent. There is a privately owned *Cinémathèque Suisse* (Swiss Film Library) in Lausanne, which was assisted by a once-only government grant in 1976, and a film museum in Zurich. SSR has made co-productions with filmmakers, for first runs in cinemas before television exposure. Films are screened in original versions with subtitles. Foreign films (some 380 per year in circulation) enjoy great success and are sometimes released in Switzerland ahead of other continental European countries.

The Interior Department's film aid program now covers advances up to one-half of the costs of production for films of merit; awards for films of special quality chosen by a jury of seven; scholarships; grants for scriptwriting; festivals and film clubs that encourage film culture. Aid may be given for foreign co-productions.

There is no film censorship.

## The Press

The Swiss press has had its freedom guaranteed by constitution since 1874. The only formal restraints are those of the general law dealing with abuse of rights of privacy, libel, et cetera. Since 1968, journalists have had the legal right to protect their sources, except in matters affecting the security of the state. There is no right of reply.

Many newspapers support particular political parties, but most are owned by institutions, organization or individuals. There are nearly 350 newspapers, of which 56 are dailies. The press is highly decentralized, with 12 dailies published in German, 20 in French and six in Italian. While a dozen or so newspapers have closed in the past decade, readership overall has not declined. Several influential French- and German-language newspapers

Research

Border  
Spillover

Constitutional  
Guarantee  
(1874)

have not only national, but international, readership. Two of these, *Neüe Zürcher Zeitung*, founded in 1780, and *Le Journal de Genève*, founded 1830, are tabloids and carry very few illustrations or photographs.

Swiss Press  
Council  
(1976)

In June, 1976 the Swiss Federation of Journalists established a Press Council.

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the patient cooperation, information and advice offered during its consultations in Switzerland by:

(SSR) *Société Suisse de Radiodiffusion et Télévision*  
(Swiss Broadcasting Corporation—French)  
E. Roy, Bernard Béguin

(SRG) *Schweizerische Radio-und Fernsehgesellschaft* (Swiss Broadcasting Corporation—German)  
Guido Frei

—  
*Neüe Zürcher Zeitung* (New Zurich News)  
Eric Mettler

*Blick*  
Fridolin Luchsinger, Hans Settler

*Association Presse Suisse* (Swiss Press Association)  
Hans Seelhofer

# The United Kingdom

## Television

(BBC)  
British  
Broadcasting  
Corporation

Canadians are quite familiar with many of the radio and television programs of the (BBC) British Broadcasting Corporation, which have had wide distribution in Canada on the CBC and occasionally on U.S. public broadcasting stations. Not so familiar, however, may be the structure of the BBC and of other components of U.K. broadcasting, or the fact that at 48 years, this is the oldest television service in the world. Except for a period during the World War II, the BBC has been telecasting daily since 1936, 10 years after its first public demonstration.

It is responsible for two television channels, BBC1 and BBC2, as well as for four national radio channels and a number of local radio outlets. The BBC was constituted by Royal Charter in 1927 (the latest charter, due to expire in 1976, has been extended to 1979). The BBC is wholly financed by licence fees collected by the Post Office, and to a limited degree by program and publication sales. The BBC is independent of government, reporting to Parliament through the Home Secretary, but it is Parliament which must approve any increase in licence fees, which currently are \$13.68 per black-and-white set and \$30.78 for colour. BBC carries no commercials. Both channels have been broadcasting in colour since 1967. The colour system adopted is the German PAL, 625-line, which was phased in from the U.S. NTSC system. BBC1 reaches about 99 per cent of the population, broadcasting 82 hours per week. BBC2, which began in 1964, reaches only 75 per cent of the population and broadcasts only 42 hours per week. BBC2 was begun to give viewers an alternative and its programs are more specifically designed for minority appeal than those of BBC1. Most production is carried out in London, in some eight regional centres in England

and in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Radio broadcasting began in the U.K. in 1922. BBC currently operates four national services. BBC began local radio in 1967 and there are now 20 stations. In addition, BBC broadcasts all over the world in 40 languages. This is financed by a special parliamentary subsidy. Such news broadcasts were familiar to Canadians on CBC-AM radio until recently, and may still be heard on CBC-FM.

### Policy Board

The government of the day appoints a board of 12 governors for a five-year term. This board includes national governors for each of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. They are responsible for the conduct of the whole broadcasting operation, including programming and facilities. The governors appoint the BBC's chief executive officer, the director-general, who is chairman of the board of management. There are more than 50 consultative committees, advising on such matters as the social effects of broadcasting; religious and school broadcasting; music; agriculture and science; and a new panel to advise on handling of labour-management news. National Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and for Wales are responsible for what is broadcast to their areas. The BBC appoints local representative councils to advise local radio stations.

The BBC's mandate is to provide a public service disseminating information, education and entertainment. It is well known to Canadians for high quality in music and pioneering drama and for its Open University, which offers credit courses by radio, television and correspondence. It has been called by one of its critics "the least worst television in the world." The BBC is expected to show balance and impartiality. The Home Secretary has a formal veto over broadcasting any item or class of item, and power to revoke the BBC's licence. That veto has never been applied. The Home Secretary may also issue directions to the BBC, which must be published, but, generally speaking,

control is in the hands of Parliament.

The BBC has been embroiled, in the past, in charges of political bias and unfairness, notably with former Prime Minister Harold Wilson in 1971.

Violence Policy

In 1960, the BBC published a code on the use of violence in (entertainment) programming. This code followed in the wake of public and parliamentary debate, which had resulted in the passage of the Obscene Publications Act, 1959, which specifically excluded applications to broadcasting and films.

In 1961, the Home Secretary sponsored a conference on juvenile delinquency. The Independent Television Authority (now renamed the Independent Broadcast Authority), offered to sponsor research on the subject.

In 1962, a further conference was called by the Home Secretary at Berkshire, which recommended the establishment of a television research committee.

Television  
Research  
Committee  
(1963-1969)

In July, 1963, the Home Secretary appointed the Television Research Committee "to initiate and coordinate research into the influence of television and the other media, on the attitudes, values and behaviour of young people." The ITA undertook to finance the Committee's work for a period of five years. To carry out its research function, in 1963 the committee established a Centre for Mass Communications Research at Leicester University. The committee published *The Effects of Mass Communication, with Special Reference to Television: A Survey* in 1964.

It published *Problems of tv Research - A Progress Report* in 1966, and its second *Progress Report and Recommendations* in 1969. The Television Research Committee found no observable relationship between violent programming and delinquency.

BBC Survey  
(1970)

In 1970, the BBC announced a survey, to last from 12 to 18 months, of the effects of violence and other aggressive behaviour on television on the lives of 2,000 families. It also set up an advisory group on the social effects of television.

BBC Note of  
Guidance  
(1972)

(IBA)  
Independent  
Broadcasting  
Authority  
(1954)

Policy Board

Public discussion and agitation were widespread. A proposal was put forward to set up a Broadcasting Complaints Commission. In 1971, the chairman of the BBC, Sir Hugh Greene, resigned in protest. The ITA set up a four-man complaints committee, under its deputy chairman, and published a code on violence in programming.

In 1972, the BBC's director of programming, after consulting with the advisory group on social effects, published a note of guidance on the portrayal of violence in television programs, including the portrayal of news and public affairs. It declared: "the basic aim must be to sharpen, and not to blunt, the human sensitivities of the viewer."

The third television channel available to viewers in the U.K. is of quite a different model. It came into being in 1954 as the Independent Television Authority, and in 1973, when radio broadcasting was added to its responsibilities, it was renamed the Independent Broadcasting Authority. By successive Acts of Parliament, its mandate has been extended to 1979; it, too, is required to provide a public service of balance and impartiality, and is subject to the same control by the Home Secretary and for its licence to the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, as is the BBC. It also telecasts in colour. The Home Secretary appoints the chairman, a deputy chairman and nine other members, three of whom have specific responsibility for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The IBA has the responsibility to build, own and operate transmission facilities, to control programming and advertising. It does not itself produce programs, which are provided by 15 independent companies, selected and contracted by the IBA board for six-year periods to provide television programs in the 14 independent television regions of Britain (two companies share London, one programs weekdays and one weekends). The largest of these companies are Thames (London), ATV (Birmingham), Granada (Man-



chester), Yorkshire (Leeds), and London Weekend (London). The companies provide both national and regional programming. The IBA has a general advisory council and committees for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as committees on advertising. Local advisory committees provide advice on the local commercial radio services.

The IBA receives no payments from licence revenue. It is financed from rental payments made to it each year by the 15 private programming companies. The companies also pay a levy to the Exchequer, a sum now based on the amount of profit. The companies derive their income from sales of advertising time. They cooperatively own a non-profit news service, Independent Television News Ltd. Each company makes its own programs, in consultation with the IBA, and purchases are often made by a consortium. The companies also exchange programs; coordination is through the IBA's network planning committee. The IBA ensures balance in programming. The younger Channel II carries programs of general format, usually lighter than the BBC's. It reaches 98 per cent of the population in black and white and over 80 per cent in colour.

Advertising is subject to rules laid down by the IBA and programs cannot be sponsored. Commercials appear in three short intervals per hour, in and between programs. They may not exceed six minutes per hour over the day and are clustered in two-minute natural breaks. (Contrast this with the U.S.'s nine and a half minutes per hour in prime time and higher during the day, and Canada's 12 minutes per hour). Advertising must be clearly distinguishable from the program and the amount of time given to commercials must not be so great as to detract from the value of the programs as a medium of information, education and/or entertainment. The IBA has published a code governing advertising standards and practices. There may not be commercials for cigarettes or betting and

no advertising at all may be used in school broadcasts.

The IBA's Working Party on the Portrayal of Violence published a report in 1973, and a further report in 1975. These reports confirmed the (then) ITA's 1971 code on violence, which is directed to its programming companies. Commercial television has had a code on violence since December 1964 and ITA (now IBA) financed the work of the Television Research Committee. The IBA's research department provides the usual types of audience research. Material submitted by the program companies to IBA is classified as suitable for any time, for after 7:30 p.m., after 9:00 p.m., and unsuitable. IBA has rarely interfered with local programming, but it did stop the telecasting of *The Wild Bunch* and *Straw Dogs*. The Authority employs independent monitors to evaluate programs, because it bears the statutory responsibility for everything it broadcasts.

The United Kingdom keeps a sharp eye on broadcasting. Official broadcasting enquiries have been numerous: the 1923 Sykes Committee; the 1925 Crawford Committee; the 1935 Ullswater Committee; the 1949 Beveridge Committee; the 1960 Pilkington Committee; and currently, the Annan Committee.

A Committee of Enquiry under the Chairmanship of Lord Annan has been studying the future of British broadcasting since 1974. Its terms of reference were:

To consider the future of the broadcasting services in the United Kingdom, including the dissemination by wire of broadcast and other programs and of television for public showing; to consider the implications for present or any recommended additional services of new techniques; and to propose what constitutional, organizational and financial arrangements and what conditions should apply to the conduct of all these services.

The Annan Report, submitted in late March, 1977, recommends that a

fourth television channel be established, controlled neither by BBC nor IBA. It recommends an "open channel", its function to be that of a publisher, with programming to be produced by independents, to be financed by a mixture of advertising (including revolutionary, for the United Kingdom, sponsorship of programs) and various grants. The report places the highest premium on diversity, editorial independence and public accountability. The Annan Committee criticizes the number of U.S. action shows telecast and reports that the best documented and most disturbing matter in the minds of the majority of television's critics is the incidence of violence.

The committee was made up of many distinguished persons, including Hilde Himmelweit, a social psychologist, who published *Television and the Child*. No original research on the question of violence was commissioned by the committee, save for a summary and evaluation of existing research by James Halloran of the Centre for Mass Communications Research at Leicestershire University.

Over the past 10 years, the name of Mary Whitehouse has become a household word in the U.K. because of her vigorous "Clean-up TV" campaign. It reflects public complaints against the BBC on subjects ranging from excessive sex and violence on television to lack of BBC responsiveness to its viewers and listeners. She has formed NVALA (the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association), and advocates establishment of a Viewers' and Listeners' Council to make the BBC more accountable to its public. She has published *Cleaning Up TV* (1966), and has also called for establishment of a Broadcasting Council, with responsibilities and functions similar to those of the Press Council.

## Film

The Board of Trade's film branch is

responsible for the commercial and industrial aspects of the film industry in Britain, including the licensing of distributors and exhibitors, registration of films, supervision of the film quota, the British Film Fund, and the National Film Finance Corporation. The artistic, cultural and educational aspects of film are the responsibility of the Department of Education and Science through the Minister for the Arts.

The film industry is privately owned and has been a pioneer, particularly in the fields of documentaries and comedies. Its products are exported all over the world, with its technical quality and acting both widely appreciated. The film industry has 16 main studios and 10 major processing labs. As an important industry and art form, film receives considerable direct government encouragement.

The industry is based in London, where most studios are located. In the late 1960s, 90 per cent of U.K. film production was financed by U.S. money. That has now dropped to two-thirds, and great concern is expressed about the dependence of the industry on foreign financing. Government encouragement is being given to co-productions with other countries, and to the establishment of industry co-operation with BBC and IBA in financing films for broadcast and cinema release.

The introduction of television made much the same impression on the film industry in the United Kingdom as elsewhere. Over a 10-year period, audiences dropped by 60 per cent, to 143 million and the number of cinemas was halved, to 1,600. Cinema audiences are now younger: research shows 75 per cent of admissions are to persons 35 or under. Ownership of cinemas has been concentrated, with two chains (Odeon and Gaumont) now owning over half of U.K. cinemas. Some production companies own their own cinemas and it is thus increasingly difficult for independent producers to have their films exhibited.

While British-made feature films continue to draw the largest audiences,

NVALA

Impact of  
Television

imports have increased, and more than half of all imported films are now U.S.-made. At present, there is a five-year delay between cinema exhibition and broadcast of U.K.-made films. Some movement exists to reduce the delay to three years, and, in the case of broadcast-financed films, even to provide for simultaneous first runs in cinemas and on television.

British Film Fund (1957)

In 1950, a voluntary plan called the Eady Levy was introduced. In 1957, it received a statutory base, creating a fund generated from a 9 per cent levy on cinema tickets. This is distributed as a cash bonus on an automatic basis by the British Film Fund to British pictures, based upon their success at the box office. The existence of this bonus has proved an attraction for American investors to make films in the U.K.

Proceeds from this levy also provide grants to the Children's Film Foundation for the production of children's films, to the British Film Institute, to the National Film School and to a pre-production fund. Financing is provided by the National Film Finance Corporation, a consortium made up of a public corporation begun in 1949 (on which Canada's Film Development Corporation of 1968 was largely modelled) and private interests. The corporation was formed in 1972, drawing funds from both the public and the private sectors. The board of directors is appointed by the government, but the corporation operates independently. The British Film Finance Corporation has been severely restricted in funds of late. This means that, while an attempt is made to finance quality films, it also supports films that it expects will become commercial successes. There is an attempt to avoid support for films featuring bombings and kidnappings, but horror films have been assisted.

National Film Finance Corporation (1972)

White Paper on Film Policy (1976)

The Wilson Labour Government commissioned a Working Party on the Future of the Film Industry, whose report was published as a government white paper in January 1976. Under the chairmanship of Sir John Terry, the

chief executive officer of the British Film Finance Corporation, major proposals were made for revitalizing the film industry: making it more independent of foreign financing; encouraging co-operation between the film industry and television; integrating responsibility for film policy, tax relief, financial awards for films of merit; and training screenwriters, tasks now split between two ministries. This would all be accomplished under a new British Film Authority.

There has been a legislated film quota since 1927. Since 1950, 30 per cent of main feature films exhibited must be British.

The British Film Institute was founded in 1933 and is partly financed by a parliamentary grant. The Institute encourages the making and showing of quality films. It administers the National Film Theatre in London, which exhibits non-commercial films of historic or cultural interest, and organizes the annual London Film Festival. The Institute also administers the National Film Archive.

The Children's Film Foundation was established in 1951, with financing originally provided by J. Arthur Rank. Now funded from the Eady Levy, it produces and distributes entertainment films specially designed for children. These are shown in specially licensed cinemas. There are some 800 children's cinema clubs offering Saturday morning programs. The Foundation has a policy of avoiding filmed violence. Guns are written out of scripts. The management is well aware of current research on the subject and conducts itself accordingly. The foundation produces about 10 hours of film each year; it is the third largest distributor in the U.K. and sells abroad to Canada and the United States (PBS).

Films were first shown publicly in the United Kingdom in 1896, and there has been concern expressed over their content ever since. Local councils have, under the guise of fire regulations, licensed cinemas under the Cinematograph Act of 1909, to which

licences they have appended conditions. As early as 1910, conditions included control over the content of films. The live presentation of plays in theatres is under the control of the Lord Chamberlain. His Examiner for Plays now operates under the Theatres Act (1968), which makes it a criminal offence to present or direct, in public or in private, an obscene performance of a play. "Obscene" is defined as "tending to deprave or corrupt persons likely to attend," although it is a good defence if the performance can be shown to be "in the public good." The approval of the Attorney General is required to institute proceedings. This Act, does not, however apply to films or cinemas.

Local  
Authority

Local authorities in the United Kingdom have imposed conditions, not only on cinemas licensed for children's films, but on others, requiring films to meet standards of decency based upon the principle that they should not tend to deprave or corrupt. The courts have upheld the authority of the local municipalities to impose such conditions, so that local authorities may act as film censors. In practice, most councils rely upon the classifications made by the British Board of Film Censors.

British Board  
of Film  
Censors  
(1912)

In 1912, the film industry set up, on a voluntary basis, the British Board of Film Censors with two rules: no nudity, and no portrayals of Jesus. While as late as 1947 the Wheare Committee was established by the Home Secretary to consider existing censorship machinery, film censorship has continued to be under the control of a voluntary body, now operating under the Cinematograph Act of 1952. The force of its authority depends upon the fact that, over the years, the local councils have adopted its judgments, although they are not bound to do so, and they occasionally fall back upon their right to impose stricter conditions. The supervision of the cinemas is a local council matter, but enforcement of admission by age appears to be left largely to cinema managers.

There is no written code for the guidance of the board, which consists of the president, secretary, four examiners and supporting staff. The president is usually a retired politician. At present, Lord Harlech is the chairman. He is appointed by an association of manufacturers of film, film producers and distributors who own most of the cinemas. The board is entirely financed by fees charged to those who submit films for classification. The examiners are not experts. The board is particularly concerned about children, and keeps watch for anything that might deprave or corrupt or have any undesirable influence or effect upon them. It is also bound by statute to ensure that cruelty to animals is not shown unless it is staged with special effects so that the animal actually remains unharmed.

The board grants certificates, and may demand cuts before granting a certificate, or may refuse to certify a film. At the time of the Commission's visit in 1976, and for some years previously, the classification system was:

U—no restrictions, passed for general exhibition;

A—general exhibition, but parental warning that it contains material more suitable for 14 and over;

AA—(introduced in 1970) suitable for over 14;

X—(introduced in 1951) suitable for over 18, the age of majority in the U.K..

Reports in January 1977 indicate, however, that classifications are to be amended, bringing them more in line with continental European classifications. If adopted, the result would be:

U—(as now),

A—lowering 14 to 12,

AA—raising 14 to 16,

X—(as now).

The board does not permit the showing of Kung Fu sticks. This appears to be effective, as only some 20 Kung Fu films have been submitted in the U.K., compared with about 250 in Ontario. Violence has long been one of the chief concerns of the board, and in 1948 and 1949, the then chairman warned the



industry about the depiction of needless violence, although without apparent effect.

In 1975, the board examined 417 feature films. Three were substantially modified and 17 rejected. *Jaws* was rated A, *Rollerball* was rated AA, *Taxi Driver* was not cut, *The Story of O* was rejected, *The Manson Murders* was rejected.

The board's mandate does not extend to control of televised films or film advertising on radio, television or in print (there is a separate industry committee on advertising). It does control foyer displays, film trailers, et cetera, for use in cinemas but not on television. It is aware of at least one case where trailers for a King Fu film were run on television still containing violent portions that has been excised from the film itself by the board. As a general rule, films are televised in the censored form, although there have been public complaints about the scheduled broadcast time of some films.

Sir John Terry's report on future film policy recommended that the present system of film censorship be continued. It also recommended that the provisions of the Theatres Act, requiring the Attorney General's fiat before prosecution, be applied to film prosecutions, and that the saving provisions of the Obscene Publications Act (1959) – whereby a conviction cannot be obtained against published material if it is proved that the publication "is justified as being for the public good on the ground that it is in the interests of science, literature, art or learning, or of other objects of general concern" – should also be applied to film.

## The Press

The United Kingdom has the world's third highest per-capita newspaper circulation, and individual circulations of some newspapers are among the highest in the world. Papers cover the full range from high quality to popular – *The Times* and *The Manchester*

*Guardian* to tabloids. Nine morning papers have national circulation and there are seven Sunday papers. Recently, total circulation has dropped by some three million, and the number of dailies has dropped. There is a tendency to concentrate newspaper, periodical and commercial television ownership and, since 1973, local newspapers have been allowed to hold shares in local commercial radio companies. Six or seven of the larger companies dominate the field, including those of some time Canadians Lords Beaverbrook and Thomson. Declining revenue, escalating costs and labour troubles have prompted the government's consideration of subsidies for the press.

The press in Britain has the same freedom as the individual to do and say what it likes, provided it does not transgress the law. There are no specific press laws, but some statutes do apply, including restrictions on reporting preliminary hearings, and divorce and domestic hearings and prohibitions against false, misleading or fraudulent advertisements. Laws of libel, defamation and contempt of court apply. The Official Secrets Act applies, as do laws against seditious libel and incitement to disaffection. The Obscene Publications Act (1969) applies.

The Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act (1955) is mainly directed against crime and horror comics.

The press (print and electronic) cooperates with police authorities by exercising restraint in reporting such matters as kidnapping and acts of terrorism.

After prompting from a royal commission and a private members' bill, the print press set up the British Press Council in 1953. Another royal commission, chaired by Lord Shawcross, recommended changes that were incorporated in 1964, resulting in a model referred to by the Canadian Senate Committee on Mass Media (1970); the Davey committee recommended establishment of a Canadian Press Council,

British Press  
Council  
(1953)

which apparently formed the stimulus for the creation of the Ontario Press Council.

The British Press Council is composed of a lay chairman (at present, Lord Shawcross), 20 professional members nominated by professional associations, societies and unions, and five members of the general public. The professional associations finance the council by voluntary contributions. Its mandate covers preservation of the established freedom of the press, the maintenance of the highest professional and commercial standards and the consideration and appropriate treatment of complaints about the conduct of the press or of persons or organizations toward the press. It publishes its adjudications, which form a growing body of helpful quasi-jurisprudence. *The Times*, along with most other newspapers, publishes the council's decisions. There are equal numbers of lay and professional members on the complaints committee. The council has no written code of ethics. The adjudication always carries a right of reply. No fees are charged complainants and there is an attempt to deal with complaints quickly. The council refuses to criticize newspapers on grounds of inaccuracy alone unless complaints are accompanied by proof of malice or negligence.

The British press has been subjected to considerable study over the past 30 years. In 1948, the government of the day established a royal commission on the press with wide terms of reference. It recommended establishment of a general council of the press. Other recommendations, such as recruiting and professionally training journalists, conducting research and developing the economics of the industry, have not been implemented.

The second such royal commission on the press was established in the early 1960s under Lord Shawcross, with a narrower, mainly economic, focus. It made recommendations for the modernization of production.

The Royal  
Commission on  
the Press  
(1974- )

The current Royal Commission on the Press was set up early in 1974 with very wide terms of reference. It was originally chaired by a judge, the late Sir Maurice Finer, and since March, 1975 has been chaired by sociologist O.R. Macgregor. Original research has been commissioned, including content analysis of newspapers, an attitude survey of what people see in newspapers and a review of sociological research on the press. Two of the commissioned researchers are Professor Dennis McQuail of the University of Southampton and Professor J. Blumer of the Centre for Television Research at the University of Leeds. The government has made a specific request for an interim report on the economics of the industry. There have been relatively few submissions critical of the press, compared with the criticism of television received by the Annan Committee. Complaints respecting the Press Council revolve around:

...its domination by members of the press; its lack of a written Code; its inability to give full reasons, notwithstanding published adjudications; lack of, or ineffectiveness of, its sanctions; its inexact standards; its tendency to do too little too late, its slowness in coming to grips with developing issues, such as privacy.

Finally, the Council is criticized as not being widely enough known, and therefore underused, by the public.

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the patient cooperation, information and advice offered during its consultations in the United Kingdom, by:

(BBC) *British Broadcasting Corporation*  
Colin Shaw, Sir Geoffrey Jackson, Robin Scott, Brian Emmett

(IBA) *Independent Broadcasting Authority*  
Brian Young, Neville Clarke, Malory Wober, Christopher Rowley

*London Broadcasting Company*  
Marshall Stewart

*Annan Committee on Broadcasting*  
Lord Annan, Hilde Himmelweit, Jean Bruce, Andrew Cook, Stephen Brodie

*British Film Finance Corporation*  
Sir John Terry

*Children's Film Foundation*  
Henry Geddes

*British Board of Film Censors*  
James Ferman, Ken Penry

*British Press Council*  
Noel Paul

*The Times of London*  
Charles Douglas Home

*The Royal Commission on the Press*  
Francis Golding

*Centre for Mass Communication Research, University of Leicester*  
James D. Halloran

*National Viewers' and Listeners' Association*  
Mary Whitehouse

# The United States

## Television

Constitutional  
Guarantee  
(1791)

A group of 10 amendments to the 1789 Constitution of the United States, passed two years later, is generally referred to as the Bill of Rights. The First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech and of the press, in the following language: "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, . . . of the press. . . ." While the First Amendment clearly applies to journalism, the law has been somewhat reluctant to afford equal protection to broadcasting.

Radio broadcasting, licensed in the U.S. since 1912, began as a plaything for amateurs, and became a means of providing programs so that receiver manufacturers could sell radio receiver sets. Almost by accident, it became a powerful means of delivering mass audiences to an advertiser. In 1936, RCA launched a million-dollar program of television field tests. In 1939, television began with limited advertising, and on a full commercial basis in 1941. With the entry of the U.S. into the war, set manufacture was stopped and television schedules curtailed. An explosion of television stations greeted the lifting of wartime restrictions. In 1940, it was decided that television would have FM sound capability. The FCC (Federal Communications Commission) the federal regulatory board, adopted the (NTSC) National Television Selection Committee colour system.

Individual stations, both radio and television, are licensed for two-year terms by the FCC. Broadcasting networks are not licensed per se.

While there are independent stations in the United States, most are loosely joined together by means of affiliation agreements into networks, public or commercial.

Most of U.S. television, the model with which the world is most familiar, derives its income entirely from sale of

advertising time. While advertising content cannot be regulated by the FCC (any more than any other kind of content, by virtue of the First Amendment), there is a limitation on the number of minutes per day that can be carried. This is established by an association of U.S. broadcasters. Advertising can be, and is, carried at any time in the program day, before, after and during programs, excepting news and religious broadcasts. Sponsorship of programs is permitted, but, because of cost, is now virtually unknown on commercial television. It continues to exist, in a less blatant form, on public broadcasting stations.

American television networks are not directly licensed by the FCC. It licenses individual stations; it also draws up network regulations designed to protect the individually licensed stations (even those owned by the networks) – which are solely responsible for what is broadcast – from excessive control by their networks. The FCC initiated a study of the "chains" in 1938, and issued regulations respecting them in 1941.

A challenge to their constitutionality was rebuffed by the Supreme Court of the United States in 1943. Television networks provide most of the programs for their affiliated stations, because of the high cost of production and the relative scarcity of creative talent. Networks now make little of their own programming in-house. Nor are they permitted to syndicate programs, except outside the country (FCC 1970). Networks own only one or two entertainment series, but they themselves produce their own news, public affairs and documentaries.

Most entertainment programs are produced independently in the Los Angeles area. Networks pay rental fees usually only for first- and second-run rights, but they exercise control at every stage of independent production, through their program and program practices/standards departments, the network censors. That control even extends to approval of artists from a



"Q list" of those actors research has shown to be acceptable to audiences. The networks employ elaborate pre-testing systems by previewing for random audiences everything from script concepts to pilot programs. Independent producers now retain syndication rights. For a successful television series, it is more profitable, after building up a collection of programs (and once a syndication or distribution system is set up), to stop production in order to put old shows into syndication on a re-run basis, than it is to continue producing new programs. Network rental fees do not meet the cost of production, so the producer loses money on each new production. This can only be recouped by syndication sales of past productions. Only very successful series are syndicated or sold abroad. That is why the popular *Mary Tyler Moore* series stopped production in 1977. For a successful show – especially a series – foreign sales and domestic syndication re-runs ensure eventual substantial profit.

Networks finance the purchase of programs and their own productions of news, public affairs and sports by selling time to national advertisers. In keeping with network affiliation agreements, stations (including those – up to five – that each network is allowed by the FCC to own outright) must "clear" a specified amount of time for network programs, including network-sold national advertising. For this time cleared, the network pays the station a percentage of that national advertising revenue. It is more profitable (but more difficult) for individual stations to sell time locally; this can only be done when the station programs its own or other non-network material. Such locally produced material as game shows and quizzes is relatively inexpensive to produce. The national networks (the so-called Big Three: ABC, CBS and NBC) produce a daily evening half-hour of national news at considerable cost; like sports, news either breaks even or is produced at a loss. Recent network plans to introduce an

hour-long national newscast have been resisted by affiliates, whose own station images are largely the product of their own local newscasts. Because the latter are heavily supported by local advertisers, stations compete with entertainment-oriented "news", sometimes known as "Happy-talk News". Considerable concern has been shown about the tendency to insert "show biz" or entertainment values into newscasts. This tendency is seen as the product of "news consultants" hired by private stations. (Shades of the film *Network!*) Individual stations fill out their schedules with old films, or tenth re-runs of once-popular series, at relatively little cost. Networks, however, rarely buy material not originally made for them, except for films produced in the first instance for cinema exhibition, or long-form blockbusters such as Franco Zeffirelli's \$12-million *Jesus of Nazareth*, which was co-produced by Lord Grade of the U.K. and Italy's RAI.

The dynamics of the system that has developed dictate that networks produce homogeneous programs, intended to attract the largest numbers of viewers at any one time and to offend no one. The larger the numbers in the audience, the higher the rate that can be charged for the relatively few minutes of available advertising time in and around the program. Thus, the measurement of audience size by some standard universally accepted by advertisers and broadcasters alike becomes necessary. On that measurement, the network sets its advertising rates and the advertisers buy – if the audience is big enough. Because all advertised products are not of the same interest to all viewers, the measurement had to be refined to provide the demographics – the age, financial status and sex of the members of the audience for any particular program or time-period – so that the advertiser could plan to buy the time that would reach his target audience. The "ratings" show only the numbers of television sets in use. Diaries used in

audience surveys yield the audience demographics. It is also thought necessary to know what the network program's comparative position is – that is, what share of the total viewing audience any particular program draws. Each of the Big Three networks should be a drawing roughly a quarter of the audience; therefore, anything over a 30 per cent share is deemed successful. The comparative “share” has become extremely important to American networks, because, when audience share of each hour or half-hour program is charted over a period of time, it can be determined which is the dominant network on an overall, continuing basis. That is of interest to the advertiser for long-term planning, and of interest to the network for setting its commercial advertising rates.

Although the public perceives ratings as being most important, networks are more interested in share, with only an incidental interest in the most highly rated shows. (It is perhaps for this reason that, when it is pointed out that the most highly rated shows are comedies, not violent offerings, the networks react with a yawn.) The difference of one share-point can mean millions of dollars in advertising revenues and can affect the price of the broadcasting company's shares in the stock market; these reflect whether a network is number one – as CBS was for 20 years, and ABC now is – or whether a network is in “the cellar” by even a one-point share spread.

Audience measurement is provided by more than one U.S. company, but the industry is guided by the measurement of the A.C. Nielsen Co. By a combination of daily diaries kept by a selected 2,200 families and records from a computer-read device installed on television receivers in some 1,200 homes, showing actual sets-in-use (but not who, if anyone, is watching), the Nielsen company each Monday morning produces a survey of the previous week, as well as “instant” or overnight readings, on the television habits of more than 65 million U.S. television homes.

The Big Three of American television own, among them, 15 individually licensed stations in the nation's largest markets; this ensures that, with their networks of affiliated stations (leaving aside entirely other mini-networks and independent stations) they reach 85 per cent of the national television public audience.

The Big Three national American networks are: (ABC) American Broadcasting Companies, the result of a 1953 merger between American Broadcasting Company and United Paramount Theatres Corporation. ABC has 177 primary and 101 secondary affiliates, and owns some 300 cinemas, and record and magazine operations.

(CBS) Columbia Broadcasting Systems Inc. owns the CBS Broadcast Group, as well as other groups for records, publishing, et cetera. It has more than 190 affiliates.

(NBC) National Broadcasting Company is only one of four divisions of the Radio Corporation of America, the other divisions being responsible for the manufacture of colour television sets and video-discs, cable, radio, records and publishing, auto rentals (Hertz), fast foods, carpets and home furnishings. NBC has 217 affiliates.

All the Big Three are public companies, and U.S. banks have major shareholdings in each.

In addition to their usual audience studies, the Big Three have undertaken extensive research, mainly in the 1970s. All have published codes for news and entertainment and all have internal censors. In 1970, ABC commissioned independent research on the effects of television on audiences. ABC deletes portions of films, re-submits them to the MPAA (Motion Pictures Association of America), and uses them only when a PG or G rating is awarded. Since 1973, ABC has run a series of in-house training workshops with the aid of its psychiatrist consultants, to keep programming and standards people aware of current research.

CBS's Office of Social Research has

ABC

CBS

NBC

Network  
Research

published a series of studies, one in 1974 and two in 1975, on messages received by children from television programs. It published a review of the literature in 1964, and, in 1976, undertook a 13-week content analysis, producing its own Violence Index.

NBC has undertaken a three-year longitudinal study on television viewing and aggressive behaviour, employing a panel of 1,000 young boys and 800 teenage boys; this is expected to be published in 1977.

Networks have been sued civilly for damages (so far unsuccessfully), by victims of violent behaviour allegedly modelled on television programs.

The three networks support (NAB) the National Association of Broadcasters, which has established a Code Authority. The economics of the system make it difficult for a network to step out alone to break new ground; when they agree to act together, as in the case of the Family Viewing Hour, a court may, as in that case, find that joint network action amounts to a breach of the First Amendment or of the anti-trust laws.

In 1923, broadcasters banded together to establish the NAB; its main purpose was to allow the broadcasters collectively to do battle with (ASCAP) the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, over artists' royalties. In 1939, the Association set up (BMI) Broadcast Music Inc. to compete with ASCAP.

Only about half of the radio stations and some three-quarters of American television stations are NAB members, and until 1976, a member might join without undertaking to be bound by the code. The 1929 code has been modified to keep pace with changing social climates, but not until 1960-61 was there any move to oversee its implementation. There are codes for television and for radio, dealing with both programming and advertising. No tobacco or liquor advertising may be broadcast, and beer and wine commercials are restricted. Commercial time for affiliated stations is confined to

nine and a half minutes in a prime-time hour and 16 minutes otherwise. Independent stations may advertise up to seven minutes in the half-hour in prime time, eight minutes during the day. It is not possible for the Code Authority to police these restrictions because of the First Amendment and because of a fear of anti-trust charges, but members usually abide by them. Complaints of infringement of the code are heard in-camera by the nine-person Television Board of Directors (made up of members); appeals are made to the Television Code Review Board. The decisions are published in the Association's journal.

Appeal

The National Association of Broadcasters has commissioned research from time to time, including research on the effects of concentration of ownership. It also does extensive in-house testing of toys for children's advertising.

There are approximately 550 affiliated stations (some are cross-affiliated – that is, to more than one network), and more than 90 independent television stations in the U.S. Television now reaches 95 per cent of all U.S. households, an audience estimated at more than 65 million households. The most profitable time of the network day is not prime evening time (where advertising rates, and audiences, are highest) but daytime, including periods of children's programming. In 1974, advertising revenue received by networks and the nearly 750 television stations, amounted to \$3.8 billion, with profits of \$737.1 million; 1976 was the most prosperous year ever and network advertising time was sold out well into 1977. The FCC reports that the Big Three had combined profits of \$454 million before taxes in 1976 – a 44.5 per cent increase over 1975 – and that network advertising sales were up 24 per cent, with net revenues up 26.5 per cent to \$2.1 billion.

All broadcasters are bound by the Fairness Doctrine, and the "equal time" rule, requiring them to include contentious public affairs program-

NAB's Code  
Authority

ming, with an opportunity for dissenting views to be heard. The FCC has passed regulations prohibiting stations from editorializing.

Under the Constitution, radio and television, like interstate commerce, fall to the jurisdiction of the federal government. (This applies to broadcasting through the air, and not to wired broadcasting, such as closed-circuit systems in apartment houses. Because such systems are local and do not cross state lines, they fall under state or local responsibility.) The original Radio Act of 1927, which established the Federal Radio Commission, was superseded by the 1934 Communications Act, as amended in 1952 and 1959.

The (FCC) Federal Communications Commission is a creature of Congress, having been established by the 1934 Communications Act to license and regulate individual stations "in the public interest, necessity and convenience" — a phrase that originated in transport legislation. The seven members of the commission are appointed for terms of seven years, staggered so that one retires each year. The members are appointed by the President, who designates one member to act as chairman. The FCC licenses individual stations and not networks, but in 1938 it enacted "chain" broadcast regulations that are still substantially in force. Their constitutionality was tested in a Supreme Court case decided in 1943. In 1946, the "Blue Book" was published, setting out the individual station's responsibility; it was superseded in 1960 by a commission policy statement. The situation now is that a station is tested at renewal time (every two years) on its record in the field of news and public affairs and local programming. In 1949, FCC regulations laid down the obligation for equal time, and the 1959 amendment to the Communications Act spelled out exemptions from the FCC's Prime Time Access rule. In 1970, the FCC's regulations limited networks' demands for affiliate "clearance" to

OCP  
(1970)

Educational  
Television  
Facilities Act  
(1962-1969)

The Carnegie  
Commission  
(1967)

Public  
Broadcasting  
Corporation  
(1967)

three program hours out of prime time (7 to 11 p.m.) to come into force in 1971, with half-hour newscasts exempted in 1975. In 1974, the FCC issued a policy statement on advertising on children's programs.

The FCC also regulates cable television, a right it asserted in 1966. Latest figures indicate that there are more than 3,000 licensed cable systems, reaching some 15 per cent, or 10 million, of the television homes.

In 1970, Congress authorized the establishment of (OCP) the Office of Communications Policy in the President's secretariat, which was very active in broadcast policy during the Nixon presidency.

With the assistance of grants from foundations and even network and commercial support (CBS twice gave million-dollar grants) public television stations were licensed, beginning with one at the University of Houston in 1959. In 1962, the FCC reserved 242 channels (two-thirds of them UHF) for non-commercial broadcasting.

In 1962, Congress enacted the Educational Television Facilities Act, which established a five-year program to be administered by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Thirty-two million dollars in matching grants were provided to assist in building public broadcasting facilities. By 1965, PBS stations were about 60 per cent dependent on public funds.

The Carnegie Commission reported in 1967 on its study of educational television, recommending that Congress establish a corporation for public broadcasting to be financed through a new tax on television receivers. The same year saw the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act, setting up the Public Broadcasting Corporation as an independent entity, financed by annual congressional subsidy; Congress granted a two-year extension of the Educational Facilities Act. The corporation's board of 15 is appointed by the President. Its mandate is to help build educational or public stations and provide programs (but not prod-

(FCC)  
Federal  
Regulatory  
Agency  
(1927)



uce them), research and assistance. It may not itself run either individual stations or a network. The corporation distributes grants directly to stations, to production organizations and to the (PBS) Public Broadcasting Service network, a private, non-profit group representing public television stations.

The corporation commissions programs from the Children's Television Workshop, Washington's National Public Affairs Center for Television, major program-oriented PBS stations and outside suppliers.

The Public Broadcasting Service network operates quite differently from the commercial networks: PBS stations pay dues to the network, based on their budget and service-area size. These stations are owned about 30 per cent by state/municipal school systems, about 35 per cent by universities, and 35 per cent by community foundations. Financing derives from congressional subsidy and from public subscriptions, foundation grants and "institutional" advertising or sponsorship. The governing board is made up of representatives of those stations. Approximately 25 per cent of programming is institutional (school) material, usually broadcast from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. About 40 per cent of the broadcast schedule derives from the PBS network, the balance being local station programming. Because the corporation pays its funds to stations and not to the network, stations bid on programs offered by the network, and the most popular ones form the PBS schedule. Most community stations broadcast from 8:00 a.m. to midnight, and sometimes later. They provide local programming, and may buy abroad independently of the network. Since 1972, when President Nixon vetoed funds voted by Congress for the corporation, public broadcasting has been in a state of flux. Differences of opinion between the Public Broadcasting Corporation and the Public Broadcasting Service have been reported in the press. It is expected the problems will be resolved during the Carter administration.

(CTW)  
Children's  
Television  
Workshop  
(1968)

Ford  
Foundation  
(1936)

Carnegie  
Corporation  
(1911)

Kefauver  
Senate  
Subcommittee  
(1954)

Dodd Senate  
Subcommittee  
(1961-65)

Kerner  
Commission  
(1968)

The Federal Office of Education invested some \$15 million in (CTW) Children's Television Workshop, created in 1968 for research and development and culminating in the 1969 debut of *Sesame Street* and, subsequently, *The Electric Company*. Foundations, notably the Ford Foundation, created in 1936 by Henry and Edsel Ford, and the Carnegie Corporation, established in 1911 by Andrew Carnegie – both organizations deeply interested in education – have provided considerable support to the cause of public broadcasting.

From the time of Senator Estes Kefauver, who chaired a Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary to investigate juvenile delinquency in 1954, there has been U.S. public concern with television's impact. Senator Thomas J. Dodd undertook the first Senate study of television violence in 1961. In the subcommittee's 1965 *Interim Report*, Dodd says:

If the 1954 findings [by Kefauver] suggested a need for a closer look at television programming as it relates to delinquency, the 1961 monitoring reports were shocking by comparison. The extent to which violence and related activities are depicted on television today has not changed substantially from what it was in 1961.

It concluded:

It is clear that television, whose impact on the public mind is equal to or greater than that of any other medium, is a factor in molding the character, attitudes and behavior patterns of America's young people. Further, it is the subcommittee's view that the excessive amount of televised crime, violence and brutality can and does contribute to the development of attitudes and actions in many young people which pave the way for delinquent behavior.

A National Advisory Commission (the Kerner Commission) on Civil Disorders investigated violence and reported in 1968. It recommended establishment of an independent moni-

(PBS)  
Public  
Broadcasting  
Service

Eisenhower  
Commission  
(1969)

toring service on the press.

In 1969, the (Eisenhower) National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Crime devoted a chapter to televised violence, and drew attention to the need for a broad-based research attack on the question. From the Eisenhower Report:

We believe that the television networks, network affiliates, independent stations, and other members of the broadcasting industry should recognize the strong probability that a high incidence of violence in entertainment programs is contributing to undesirable attitudes and even to violence in American society. It is time for them to stop asserting "not proved" to charges of adverse effects from pervasive violence in television programming when they should, instead, be accepting the burden of proof that such programs are not harmful to the public interest. Much remains to be learned about media violence and its effects, but enough is known to require that constructive action be taken at once to reduce the amount and alter the kind of violent programs which have pervaded television.

The producers of television programs have access to the imagination and knowledge of the best talents of our time to display the full range of human behavior and to present prominently and regularly what is possible and laudable in the human spirit. They have time to think and experiment, and they have the entire history of man from which to draw. Television entertainment based on violence may be effective merchandising, but it is an appalling way to serve a civilization – an appalling way to fill the requirements of the law that broadcasting serve the "public interest, convenience and necessity."

Early in 1969, Senator John Pastore, chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Communications, wrote to the Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Services about the dearth of research

Surgeon  
General's  
Advisory  
Committee  
(1969-1972)

to help resolve the question of a causal connection between televised crime and violence and anti-social behaviour of the audience, especially children. Shortly after, the Surgeon General announced the appointment of an advisory committee of 12 to commission research. The research and its publication took a period of three years. One million dollars was spent on commissioned research alone. There were 23 research projects and more than 40 technical papers.

The committee was made up of five persons nominated by the networks (two of whom were network employees) and seven representing the disciplines of sociology, psychology, clinical psychiatry, political science, law, anthropology and communications study. The advisory committee was told to confine its study to scientific findings and to make no policy recommendations, nor was it even permitted to develop a strategy of approach to the research.

After publication of the *Report* of the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee in 1972, Senator Pastore held further Senate hearings; a consensus was reached that appeared to include even the networks, which promised to clean up television violence. In 1974, Senator Pastore held a further set of hearings. He urged development of a set of measurements to provide a "violence profile" of television programming. The HEW Secretary funded Dr. George Gerbner of the Annenberg School of Communications in Pennsylvania, who had been developing a violence index. Gerbner has now published, with funding from the National Institute for Mental Health, his eighth rating of violence on television, the "Violence Profile".

In his evidence before the Pastore subcommittee, following release of the *Report* of his advisory committee, the U.S. Surgeon General, Jesse L. Steinfeld said:

While the committee report is carefully phrased and qualified in language acceptable to social scientists,

Pastore  
Senate  
Subcommittee  
(1972)  
(1974)

Pastore Senate  
Subcommittee  
(1969)

it is clear to me that the causal relationship between televised violence and anti-social behavior is sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action. The data on social phenomena such as television and violence and/or aggressive behavior will never be clear enough for all social scientists to agree on the formulation of a succinct statement of causality. But there comes a time when the data are sufficient to justify action. That time has come.

Networks began to undertake their own social research in the 1970s.

In August 1975, the Aspen Institute sponsored a conference on "Television as a Social Force - New Approaches to Television Criticism".

The Big Three networks announced that they were introducing a Family Viewing Hour for the 1975-76 season. A California court struck down the concerted action of the networks as unconstitutional in the summer of 1976.

In the late 1960s, ACT (Action for Children's Television), a consumer's group initiated by three concerned women in Newtonville, Mass., petitioned the FCC to prohibit commercial advertising during children's programming; this resulted in an avalanche of written support, but publication of only a policy statement by the FCC in 1973; in the summer of 1976, ACT sponsored a conference to review progress.

In 1976, the Subcommittee on Communications of the Committee of Interstate and Foreign Commerce of the U.S. House of Representatives, under the chairmanship of Lionel Van Deerlin, held a series of public hearings in Denver, Los Angeles and Washington, on televised violence and obscenity, and undertook to rewrite the 1934 Communications Act entirely. The subcommittee is continuing hearings. Before the subcommittee in 1977, Dean George Gerbner reported:

Television violence in the U.S. hit its highest level of the decade in 1975.

The violence level increased sharply

on all three networks, with biggest jumps during "family viewing time." Violence also rose in weekend children's programming time.

He found NBC broadcasts the most overall violent, followed by ABC and CBS, the first network to adopt the family-hour concept.

In December 1976, the NCCB (National Citizen's Committee for Broadcasting) released an American Medical Association-funded study of the most violent television programs, with a list of their advertisers.

In January 1977, the National Parent-Teachers Association conducted a series of public meetings to stimulate public discussion and action.

Also in January 1977, the outgoing chairman of the FCC, Richard Wiley, announced a new, wide-ranging inquiry into network programming practices, citing concern with network dominance, through their direct interest in production facilities, in the actual production of entertainment shows, as well as through their decision-making power in the direct purchase of programs from independent producers. He noted that each network, through ownership and management of its own stations, directly reaches a fourth of the national viewing audience.

The Aspen Institute is preparing a study of future broadcast policy, based on new technology.

In February 1977, the president of NBC announced to a meeting of network affiliates that the next season's schedules will reflect his network's response to public concern:

NBC, viewing television as a whole, believes that the proliferation of program types whose plotlines heavily involve violence has become excessive. It is taking positive and practical steps to reduce the number of those programs on the NBC television network. This emphasis on non-violent programs in development, and reduction in hard-action police shows, is a matter of conscious television network and corporate man-

New  
Congressional  
Broadcasting  
Policy

Van Deerlin  
House  
Subcommittee  
(1976)

agement policy. It will give NBC the opportunity to reduce violence in its program schedule and further to diversify its programming. NBC intends to realize that opportunity.

Shortly afterward, it was announced that the National Association of Broadcasters' Code Authority was to meet with the AMA, the PTA and NABB, to discuss the issue.

There was a Sloan Commission Report on Cable Communications, issued December 1971 and entitled *On the Cable*. It contrasted the "television of scarcity" required by the limited number of available channels with the "television of abundance" that would come when television programs could be delivered to people's homes through coaxial cables – or what others have called a "wired nation."

Only a full-time job claims more of the average American's time than does television. Television viewing consumes 1,200 hours yearly, while newspaper and magazine reading accounts for only one-third that total. Books are read for only 10 hours in 365 days. Television is the national pastime, but few Americans have developed the critical skills necessary to gauge the flickering box's impact on themselves and their families.

## Film

The U.S. film industry has been one of the giants of production since its infancy, at about the turn of the century. It was originally located in New York and New Jersey, but within a decade filmmakers fled to escape harassment for breach of copyright, first to Florida and then to the Los Angeles area, to be close to the Mexican border. Hollywood became the mecca, not only for star-struck aspiring actors, singers and dancers, but also for writers, directors, cameramen, wardrobe and makeup stylists, and technicians of all kinds. The Hollywood film gained quick acceptance across the United States and Canada and, almost as quickly,

crossed the seas to embrace the world.

Film producers early learned that making films would not, in itself, ensure their exhibition. Without a distribution system and an exhibition circuit, there was no guarantee they would ever reach an audience. Major film producers set up elaborate distribution systems and acquired or built cinemas, and the classic producer-distributor-exhibitor vertical integration, with popular actors bound to long-term contracts, led to the development of Hollywood's heyday. The first blow against the neat circle came with government anti-trust suits: the film giants were required to divest themselves of their cinema circuits. The industry's majors digested that because cinemas still needed products; they dominated the film production field and they still had their distribution systems intact. U.S. film production was highest in the late 1940s: almost 400 films a year. With the advent of television, the impact on the industry was felt as sharply in the United States as in Europe. In 1951, cinemas began to close in cities where television was available. In 1953, there were 19,000 cinemas; in 1965, there were 10,000. Annual attendance dropped by more than 50 per cent in 10 years.

The pattern of cinema-going is changing, with the U.S. audience now principally in the 18-to-34 range, and more shopping centre and drive-in cinemas. Multiple cinemas are also increasing. Cinema audiences appear finally to be stabilizing, if not slowly increasing, since the sharply defined drop of the 1950s.

The film industry was understandably antagonistic to television. Studios tried to keep their contract stars from appearing on the medium, and refused at first to sell their backlog of earlier films for telecast. Undaunted, the television industry developed its own stars, and television viewing continued to erode cinema audiences. The breakthrough came in 1954, when the Disney Studios and Warner Bros. agreed

Impact of  
Television



to provide programs for ABC. In 1956, pre-1948 movies by the hundreds were released to television. The U.S. Hollywood-based film industry fell on hard days. Eastern banks moved in, and production was tightened. At the height of their film careers, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Charles Chaplin and D.W. Griffiths had created United Artists to finance film production independent of the industry establishment. By 1951, United Artists was losing \$100,000 a week. Last year (1976) it made \$229.5 million, more than any other U.S. film company. It is now the United Artists Corporation, a subsidiary of the Transamerica Corporation. The establishment of United Artists began a trend to independent production, now a major factor in the industry. Over the past few years, film production has stabilized at about 280 features including co-productions (twice the 1961 low of 142). Several hundred European films are imported each year. An all-time low in films rated for general viewing was reached in 1975, and some 55 per cent of production was restricted or prohibited for admission to those under 17.

The impact of television and the steeply rising costs of Hollywood production drove producers out of studios and into location films. Because production costs were lower abroad, and government incentives offered there, many producers made films in other countries, some of them co-productions.

U.S. domestic sales now provide only about half of a film's total rental revenue, even when Canada – now the largest consumer of U.S. films, accounting for 15 per cent of total revenue – is included. American distributors have formed elaborate foreign distribution networks (United Artists alone has outlets in 75 countries) and the trend is to buy up foreign cinema circuits to ensure exhibition of U.S. films. During 1976, U.S. distributors were under attack for their toughened sales posture in Sweden, Norway and Italy; in the former two countries, their

films were boycotted.

Hollywood's studios (Universal in particular) are actively engaged in production of made-for-television fare – series, mini-series, long-form films and specials. Even made-for-cinema features now appear on television immediately following cinema exhibition, although the increasing number of films with restricted ratings means they must be cut before being televised. The 50-year backlog of Hollywood's production has been used up, although some of the older films, such as *Gone with the Wind*, still command inflated television rentals.

In 1896 Edison's Kinetoscope was introduced at Atlantic City. Only two weeks' later, authorities objected to the film's content. Chicago passed an ordinance in 1907, and in 1908 the mayor of New York ordered the cinemas to be closed. A court injunction prevented their closure, but this led to establishment of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures in 1909. Censorship boards were constituted in Pennsylvania in 1911, Ohio in 1913, Kansas in 1914, and New York and Virginia in 1922. In 1922, a voluntary system of control was instituted by the film industry under Will W. Hays. The Hays' Office functioned between 1922 and 1933, but failed to still the protesting voices.

Between 1929 and 1933, a number of research projects that came to be known as the Payne Fund Studies were undertaken to examine the role and impact of films upon children and adolescents. The results were published in a popular book, *Our Movie-Made Children*, by Henry James Forman. It added fuel to complaints from many quarters, in particular, the Catholic Legion of Decency. Dozens of national and religious organizations adopted resolutions demanding federal regulation of films. In 1934, the film industry adopted the production code of what was known as the Breen Office. Challenges to the courts were made, and while an earlier decision held that films were not speech, so that no question of

Payne Fund  
Studies  
(1929-1933)

the First Amendment arose, in 1952 the U.S. Supreme Court reversed itself. The courts thus held that pre-censorship of films was unconstitutional. The suggestion was made, however, that if it were sufficiently specific, a system of classification would not offend constitutional freedom. The (MPAA) Motion Pictures Association of America therefore replaced its production code authority with (CARA) the Code and Rating Administration. The MPAA is an association of major producers: United Artists (owned by Transamerica), MCA, Paramount (owned by Gulf and Western), Warner Brothers (owned by Warner Communications), Columbia Pictures, 20th Century-Fox, Walt Disney Productions and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

MPAA Code  
Authority  
(1968)

In 1968, the MPAA adopted a new code, whose principles apply both to films and to their advertising and promotional material. This is a voluntary body, so there is no obligation for any film to be submitted, but, except for those designed only for adult audiences, most films are sent to the Code Authority for classification. A Policy Review Committee lays down the classifications, which are:

- G for general audiences
- GP parental guidance
- R restricted to 17 and over unless accompanied by an adult
- X restricted to 17 and over.

Note that an X-rating does not mean that the film is pornographic.

Appeal

The Code Administrator applies the appropriate classification, based upon the Policy Review Committee's directives. An aggrieved producer may appeal the rating to the 22-member New York-based Appeals Board, which may reverse the administrator's decision by a two-thirds vote. Films may be re-submitted, with cuts, to obtain a higher rating. The Code and Rating Administration is supported by the members of the association, by most independent producers, by the National Association of Theater Owners, and by the Importers and Distributors' Association, but there are

American  
Humane  
Association

increasingly frequent, well-publicized attacks on the Code Authority, as producers and distributors seek higher ratings for films to assure them wider access to cinema and television audiences.

The U.S. Catholic Conference has established an office for film and broadcasting ratings. It publishes *Film and Broadcasting Review*. It rates films:

Class C – condemned

Class B – morally objectionable in whole or in part

Class A – (1, 2, or 3) acceptable.

Nearly 40 per cent of the films reviewed in 1976 were found to be morally objectionable. This was an increase of 5 per cent over previous years, which itself was up 13 per cent from the year before that. Violence, often combined with sex, rather than sex alone, was responsible for most of the B and C ratings.

Films using animals are subject to another monitoring: to ensure that no animals are actually abused, hurt, or killed, the American Humane Association operates a Los Angeles Office, which assigns inspectors to film sites. The Humane Association also publishes a newsletter that rates films.

The Federal Criminal Code prohibits obscenity, and there are a number of state laws with similar provisions. In 1975, the U.S. Supreme Court decided (*Roth v. U.S.*) that the test of obscenity was "whether, to the average person, applying contemporary community standards, the dominant theme of the material, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interest." For a conviction, the material had to be "utterly without redeeming social value." In 1973, in a series of cases before the Supreme Court (notably *Miller v. California*), a new test was substituted: to be obscene, the material must not have serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value, and the community standard to be applied is that of the state or the local community. Although a subsequent Supreme Court decision cast some doubt on the local community standard, there has been a rash of

successful obscenity prosecutions in various parts of the United States. Chicago, which first passed a municipal ordinance in 1909, the validity of which was tested in the courts in 1909 and again in 1961, has long had a five-member police department panel to license cinemas. A by-law enacted in 1976 provides for denial of licences to harmful films, deemed too obscene or violent for minors.

Legal controls on films, therefore, are under local community licensing control and subject to local prosecution under obscenity laws, for which rating by the MPAA constitutes no defence. It should be remembered that not all films are submitted to the MPAA; a producer or importer may himself apply an X-rating. The U.S. Supreme Court has never really accorded full First Amendment rights to films.

The American Film Institute, established under the National Foundation of the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, to promote film training and education, production, publications and an archive, has a library of more than 5,000 films. The University of California Theater Arts Library preserves film stills and scripts, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City has about 5,000 archival films. The Library of Congress also contains film archives.

## The Press

The First Amendment's Constitutional guarantee of the freedom of speech and the press is most jealously guarded in the United States. The courts have consistently upheld that right, subject only to the general laws on libel, obscenity, right of privacy and anti-trust. Generally, the asserted right of a print journalist to conceal both his notes and sources has been upheld. The most recent, widely reported judicial confirmation that there can be no prior restraint on publication, nor even action that constitutes a threat of future retribution (the "chilling" effect), was the Pentagon Papers case, in which the court refused to permit the Nixon government to restrain use

Hutchins Commission on  
Press Freedom  
(1947)

of documents, although it was asserted that their publication would be a breach of national security. In 1974, however, a U.S. court did grant a restraining order to the CIA to prevent publication of a former agent's autobiography until it had excised large portions of the book.

In 1947, under the leadership of Robert M. Hutchins and funded by Henry R. Luce, a Commission on Freedom of the Press recommended establishment of a new and independent agency to appraise and report annually on the performance of the press.

In 1968, the Kerner Commission recommended establishment of an Institute of Urban Communication on a private, non-profit basis, with the responsibility to review press and television coverage of riot and racial news, and publicly award praise and blame. In 1968, editor Otto Larsen published *Violence and the Mass Media* and recommended an institute to conduct continuing systematic, objective, comparative surveillance of mass media content. Nicholas Johnson, a former FCC commissioner, has recommended an institute independent of government and media industries for monitoring broadcasting.

Professor Jerome A. Barron has argued in the *Harvard Law Review* that:

First Amendment freedoms today must mean something more than the right to establish one's own multi-million dollar television station, network or newspaper. There must be a public right of access to the media.

In March, 1977, *Time* magazine reported that, at a press conference in Sacramento, California, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations had expressed the wish that reporting of spectacular violence could be regulated.

Distressed by the overheated coverage of the Hanafi Muslims' siege in Washington, DC, [Ambassador Andrew] Young suggested that the Supreme Court

might “clarify” the Constitution’s First Amendment to inhibit newspapers and television from creating a climate of violence. Although he later backed away from the idea and admitted that he was reacting rather emotionally, Young appeared to be advocating press censorship.

Citing the First Amendment, even serious newspapers such as *The New York Times* have, as yet, refused to become members of the National News Council, established on a voluntary basis by national news organizations, both print and broadcast, in 1973. The National News Council is a non-profit organization that monitors the performance of the news media. It is the result of a study commissioned by the Twentieth Century Fund, which recommended that

an independent and private national news council be established to receive, examine and report on complaints concerning the accuracy and fairness of news reporting in the United States, as well as to initiate studies and report on issues involving the freedom of the press.

The council accepts complaints from both individuals and organizations on all news reporting in all media, whether national or local in initial circulation, if the matter is of national significance as news or for journalism. The 18-member council is composed of eight persons from news organizations and 10 from the public sector. Its first two chairmen were retired judges; its new chairman is a respected journalism professor. The council also has a standing committee on the freedom of the press, which considers matters concerning the preservation of freedom of communication and issues involving press ethics.

*The Washington Post* is a special case. It has contracted with the former editor of a competing newspaper to act as an in-house ombudsman (not so called), with a free mandate to criticize the newspaper’s handling of news

where he perceives it to fall short of standards of fairness, accuracy, relevance or completeness. *The Post* regularly publishes his critical assessments. His independence is guaranteed: he is the only person at *The Post* who has a contract.

Together with the usual letter-to-the-editor pages, these are newspaper responses providing voluntarily a public right of reply aside from court action for defamation or breach of privacy.

More newspapers and magazines are published in the United States than in any other country of the world. A few major city dailies have countrywide and even international readership, but there are no national newspapers. Eighty-five per cent of U.S. communities now are one-newspaper towns, due to increasing concentration of ownership. Overall daily circulation figures have not kept up with the increase in population. Newspaper content runs from 65 to 75 per cent advertising. There is an influential quality press, and a wide range of popular press.

Many mass magazines have failed, or been closed in the past decade (*Life*, *Look*, *Collier’s*, *Saturday Evening Post*) or have cut down page size or increased advertising space.

Some 200 million comic books are sold in the U.S. each year. They are reprinted and sold in 30 different languages. In 1953, Frederic Wertham published *Seduction of the Innocent*, which charged that reading crime and horror comics was an incitement to juvenile crime. In its interim report of 1954, the Kefauver Senate Subcommittee investigating juvenile delinquency dealt extensively with the contribution of crime and horror comics. The subcommittee rejected censorship because of the First Amendment, but urged that the industry produce and police a code to eliminate all materials that could produce detrimental effects. The industry had tried to form such an association in 1948, but was unable to do so. Under the incentive of the Kefauver recommendations, (CMAA)



the Comic Magazines Association of America was formed in late 1954. It published a code forbidding the portrayal of crime and violence. The code was liberalized in 1971.

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the patient cooperation, information and advice offered during its consultations in the United States by:

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*The Caucus Committee for Producers, Writers and Directors*  
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*(CTW) Children's Television Workshop*  
Edward Palmer

*(CBS) Columbia Broadcasting System*  
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*Columbia Teacher's College*  
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*(CMAA) Comic Magazine Association of America*  
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*Los Angeles Times*  
Charles Champlin

*(MPAA) Motion Picture Association of America Code Authority*  
Aaron Stern

*(NABB) National Association for Better Broadcasting*  
Frank Orme

*(NAB) National Association of Broadcasters*  
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*(NBC) National Broadcasting Corporation*  
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# Canada

## Television

By the end of the 1920s, most of Canada was within range of U.S. radio stations – yet only 60 per cent of Canadians could receive Canadian radio. By the end of that decade, at least 80 per cent of the radio programs listened to were of U.S. origin. Alarmed, the government appointed a royal commission to recommend a truly Canadian system. In 1929, the Aird Report recommended establishment of an independent system that would own and operate all Canadian stations; that would be governed by a large and regionally representative voluntary board, managed by broadcasting experts, and programmed by provincial directors. Such a system would be financed by a combination of radio licence fees of \$3.00, sponsorship of programs (but no spot commercial advertising) and government subsidies.

The jurisdiction of the federal government over broadcasting was at once challenged by the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Manitoba. In 1932, the Privy Council ruled that over-the-air broadcasting was exclusively within federal jurisdiction. A special committee of Parliament was appointed to design the new system. Its report was adopted almost unanimously and in 1932 the Broadcasting Act was passed; it set up a three-man Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission, appointed by the government, with responsibilities both for policy and management and for technical facilities of a monopoly broadcasting entity. Financing was to derive from a \$2 radio licence fee. By 1936, the service reached only half of Canadians, broadcasting in the evenings and on Sunday afternoons only. To expect three men to be responsible for both technology and programming, as well as for management, was to expect the impossible. It was just as unrealistic to expect the meagre licence revenue to

Parliamentary  
Committee  
(1933)

Parliamentary  
Committee  
(1936)

(CBC) Canadian  
Broadcasting  
Corporation  
Radio Canada  
(1936)

The Massey  
Royal  
Commission  
(1951)

stretch very far.

A 1933 parliamentary committee recommended appointment of a broadcasting expert as general manager; the recommendation was not acted upon. In 1936, another parliamentary committee was appointed to study and report on the CRBC; it repeated the 1934 managerial recommendation and further recommended that a public corporation, modelled more closely on the lines of a private corporation or of the BBC, be constituted to replace the CRBC. It called for a policy board of “nine men of broad outlook”, representing all parts of Canada, with the technical aspects to be handled by a government department.

In 1936, a new Broadcasting Act along these lines created the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Radio-Canada to program its own service and to regulate private broadcasters. Private broadcasting stations proliferated after World War II.

From 1951 on, licence fee revenue was wholly inadequate and the CBC was dependent on parliamentary subsidies. In 1953, receiver licence fees were abolished.

Beginning in 1952, Canada adopted television more quickly than any other country in the world. By the end of 1955, it had become, in many respects, the world’s second television country – in terms of numbers of programs and stations, network service, extent of coverage and per-capita ownership of sets. Montreal became the fourth and Toronto the fifth largest world television production centre. The corporation became the world’s largest French television service, in sets-in-use and production of programs.

There was constant public debate about the CBC: some thought it too independent and called for more authoritative control; some thought it too vulnerable to government influence and wanted it assured long-term financing rather than an annual parliamentary subsidy.

In 1951, the Massey Commission on the Arts, Letters and Sciences recom-

The Aird  
Commission  
(1928-1929)

Parliamentary  
Committee  
(1932)

CRBC  
(1932)

Fowler Royal  
Commission on  
Broadcasting  
(1955-1957)

BBG  
(1958)

CTV  
(1961)

Fowler Com-  
mittee on  
Broadcasting  
(1964)

mended an enquiry into broadcasting. In 1955, Robert Fowler was appointed to chair a royal commission to investigate broadcasting and recommend improvements. After spending 47 days on public hearings in nine provinces, receiving 276 briefs and 600 letters, it reported in 1957, recommending a new independent body to regulate both the CBC and private broadcasters, with provision for long-term financing for the CBC. In 1958, a new Broadcasting Act was passed, creating the (BBG) Board of Broadcast Governors to regulate both public and private broadcasting. The BBG was given authority to license radio and television stations, including privately owned commercial stations. In 1961, the second channel was opened: the (CTV) Canadian Television network was born when eight new commercial stations linked up as a network. The public network, CBC, was financed mainly from parliamentary subsidies, but included some commercial advertising; the private commercial network was to operate along the U.S. commercial network model, except that the eight stations owned the network. Public criticism of partisanship in both the BBG and the CBC led to the appointment by the government in 1963 of an informal committee to discuss Canadian broadcasting.

In 1964, the government called again upon Robert Fowler to head a formal, non-parliamentary three-man advisory Committee on Broadcasting. It held no hearings and commissioned no research; it made its recommendations in 1964. The Report, which reiterated the Aird Commission of 35 years earlier, spoke of "the need for the broadcasting system to help establish a Canadian cultural identity, particularly in the face of American encroachments." It accepted the philosophy that public ownership and/or control is appropriate over media in which the channels for information and entertainment are severely limited. But it also suggested some measures to prevent government influence over broadcasting, which it perceived as a danger in any system

Broadcasting  
Act  
(1968)

Policy Board

involving public ownership and control. The Fowler Report recommended creation of one regulatory body for the whole broadcasting system, public and private; it condemned U.S. programming domination; it accused both the CBC and private broadcasting of failing to interpret the two national cultures to each other; and it stated that the CBC administration was top-heavy – that the corporation lacked unity, cohesion and esprit de corps.

In 1966, the government tabled a white paper and in 1968 the current Broadcasting Act was passed. It established (CRTC) the Canadian Radio-Television Commission, a new body with power to regulate all parts of the broadcasting system. The Cabinet appointed a new president and a new vice-president, and the CBC was reorganized from within by the appointment of a vice-president (English) and a vice-president (French).

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation broadcasts in English and French, and to the North in Inuit and a number of Indian dialects. The board of governors, 15 in number including the president, are appointed by the Cabinet. The board appoints the vice-president, upon the nomination of the president (who is also chairman of the board) with the approval of the Cabinet. Part-time board members are appointed for five-year terms, the president for seven years.

The CBC television network consists of 26 owned-and-operated stations (17 English, nine French) and 34 affiliated stations (27 English, seven French). Approximately 97 per cent of people whose first language is English can receive English-language CBC service; 98 per cent whose first language is French can receive Radio-Canada. Telecasts began on a regular basis in 1952, colour in 1966. Canada adopted the American NTSC system, with FM sound capacity.

The CBC operates seven major domestic services: two television networks (English and French); two AM radio networks (English and French);



two FM radio networks (English and French); and the multilingual Northern Service, as well as an external foreign broadcasting service. It delivers service across five time zones and broadcasts a full day, from 8 a.m. or earlier to 1 a.m. or later. Approximately 75 per cent of its programming is Canadian produced and 25 per cent is imported. It buys from the United States and from the United Kingdom (principally from the BBC) for the English network. The little foreign-language material that is used is subtitled, unless it has already been dubbed for U.S. distribution. Radio-Canada, the French network, casts its purchase net much wider. It imports some programs from the United States, but introduces programs from many European sources, as well as producing approximately one-third of its programs itself. Programs from the English and French networks are virtually never exchanged, and cooperatively produced programs are a rarity. Most of the CBC's own programming is done in-house; in 1975 it spent only 5 per cent of its budget commissioning independent productions. The CBC English-language service makes few co-productions. It eschews the "star" system. It has produced high-quality comedy, drama and music and good children's programs, but is known mainly for its news and public affairs productions. Most Canadian writers, broadcasters and producers have received their early training in the CBC, and it provides the chief winter employment opportunity open to the Canadian acting community. Radio-Canada produces high-quality children's programming, and is famous for its "soaps" or *téléromans* and variety shows.

The CBC English network and Radio-Canada derive 80 per cent of their income from parliamentary subsidy. The balance is made up from commercial advertising, which appears in and around programming. The number and spacing of advertisements is controlled by CRTC regulation. The CBC is said not to pursue an aggressive policy

in selling its programs abroad. Children's program periods do not carry advertising. There is some school broadcasting, but relatively little since establishment of provincial educational television networks.

The CBC has a long-established research department that carries out the usual audience research employing an enjoyment index, as well as limited program research. It has undertaken wider audience-habit research, and on occasion it commissions out-of-house studies from private consultants. It has not done specific research on the impact of violent content.

The "second" television network, CTV, was created in 1961 to link together the first eight non-CBC "second channel" private commercial licensed television stations. In 1972, CTV was reorganized with three types of affiliates: three supplemental affiliates, 15 affiliates and eight full affiliates. The network has stations in all 10 provinces, with a coverage of approximately 85 per cent of the population. It broadcasts a full day from 6:30 a.m. until after midnight, seven days a week. Most of its Canadian programming is produced by the full affiliate stations, notably Toronto's CFTO, and it buys U.S. programs heavily.

There is little public debate about CTV's programming practices, perhaps because the Canadian public expects so little of commercial broadcasting, or more likely because the public does not perceive that it pays for commercial broadcasts.

There are also regional networks: TVA, with five affiliates, programs in French throughout Quebec; Global, an Ontario network, programs in English; there are three educational television networks, operated by provincial entities, in Alberta (Access Alberta), Quebec (Radio-Québec) and Ontario (TVOntario). There are also a number of independent television stations, most broadcasting in English. With the exception of CBC and the provincial educational networks, there are no in-

house research facilities.

(CATV) Community Antenna Television, or cable television, has made a swift and deep penetration into the Canadian market. Introduced in the late 1960s, cable is now available to more than half of Canadians. Originally accepted to increase clarity of the signal, it has mushroomed because it imports distant signals of major U.S. networks to Canadian cities. Most large Canadian cities are within reach of U.S. television signals; only Buffalo and Detroit can receive Canadian signals. Cable operators have been licensed; their revenues (from monthly user fees) are now more than half that of the revenue of the broadcasting operators. U.S. border stations (notably in Buffalo and in Washington state, south of Vancouver) beam messages of Canadian advertisers to Canadian audiences, deriving an annual revenue of \$20 million from this source – about a tenth of Canadian broadcasters' revenues. The CRTC has encouraged cable operators carrying Buffalo signals to randomly black out commercials. In 1976, Parliament enacted legislation to disallow Canadian commercials on U.S. stations as income tax exemptions. Border broadcasters have brought suit in both U.S. and Canadian courts.

The CRTC (Canadian Radio-Television Commission) was established by the 1968 Broadcasting Act. Its name was subsequently changed in 1975, to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, to reflect new responsibilities for regulating telecommunications. The commission consists of five full-time members appointed for terms of seven years and 10 part-time members appointed for five years. The appointments are made by the Cabinet and two of the full-time members are designated by the Cabinet as chairman and vice-chairman. The Cabinet may give the CRTC directions, but the directions must be published. The commission's responsibility extends to the licensing and regulation

of all Canadian broadcast undertakings. This includes radio, television, cable and, unlike the U.S. FCC, networks. In 1968 and 1969, the Cabinet issued directives to make ownership of broadcasting undertakings Canadian. The CRTC must approve transfers of ownership. In 1968, regulations were issued respecting concentration of ownership. In 1970, the CRTC increased the minimum Canadian content required from the 1962 level of 55 per cent to 60 per cent, with a limit of 30 per cent on programming imported from any one country. In 1975, it issued a major policy statement on cable. Between 1972 and 1974, it has passed regulations limiting the frequency and duration of commercial interruptions, participated in the establishment of an industry code governing advertising on children's programming; it has also dealt with CATV and passed regulations outlining a Canadian content policy for commercials, effective in 1976.

The CRTC has a small research facility, but it is not accessible to outsiders. In August 1975, under the auspices of the research section of the CRTC, a symposium on television violence was held in Kingston. Here were brought together researchers and academics, broadcasters, other media and government representatives, with some invited members of the public and of pertinent organizations. The seminar was not open to the general public. No attempt was made to reach conclusions. The papers produced at the symposium were published in book form in 1976. The introduction by Pierre Juneau, then chairman of the CRTC, explained:

There is a growing concern in Canadian society about violence in the media. Although the CRTC is very much aware of the problem, the solution has not been so obvious. Everyone is conscious of the hazards any discussion of media content implies – censorship for instance – and of the particularly important problem cable television poses to the

Border  
Spillover

CRTC  
Symposium on  
Television  
Violence  
(1975)

CRTC  
(1968)

Canadian broadcasting environment. We have not excluded the possibility of eventually holding a CRTC public hearing on media violence. But we thought that a more informal gathering, such as this one, would be part of the process of acquiring and developing more knowledge on the subject of violence, and would be more appropriate at this time. Such a meeting gathers people from various sectors, knowledgeable and interested in television and the particular matter of violence in television – people representing the social sciences, the various professional media sectors such as production, writing, criticism, and also people concerned with the economic aspects of broadcasting.

This meeting is not an official CRTC hearing, nor will it lead to any public CRTC decisions. It is rather a forum where we hope people will have a chance to exchange views on the very many complicated aspects of violence and the electronic media.

Concern over hockey violence, and the impact of televised games, led two provincial governments to appoint special inquiries: the Government of Ontario commissioned in 1974 an Investigation and Inquiry into Violence in Amateur Hockey, by William R. McMurtry. An even more extensive inquiry into hockey violence has been conducted by Québec's *Comité d'étude de la violence au hockey* under the chairmanship of Gilles Neron of the Université de Montréal.

Canadian commercial broadcasters belong to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (90 to 95 per cent of the total, radio and television). It publishes codes of ethics on advertising, including children's advertising and program standards, arranges exchanges of programs, and acts as an industry spokesman.

The Canadian Radio Broadcasting League (now the Broadcasting League) is a private organization of individuals concerned with public broadcasting.

The League was conceived in 1930 by Graham Spry and the late Alan B. Plaunt, who were called upon by Prime Minister Bennett to assess public opinion before the introduction of a public broadcasting monopoly. The same organization was called upon to comment on the formulation of the 1968 Broadcasting Act, and in 1976, at the government's request, the Broadcasting League conducted a seminar at Halifax to consider the future impact of the proposed introduction of pay-TV. Its report was published under the title *Crisis in Broadcasting*. A similar seminar was conducted in Toronto, under the auspices of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers.

Pay-TV was also discussed by the Canadian Institute of Public Affairs in its summer 1976 Couchiching conference on the state of Canadian culture. Proposals for the future use of pay-TV were solicited by the CRTC. A hearing on the subject is scheduled for May 1977.

The mandate of the CBC provides that it should be a balanced service of information, enlightenment and entertainment for people of different ages, interests and tastes, covering the whole range of programming in fair proportion. It should be in English and French, serving the special needs of geographic regions, and actively contributing to the flow and exchange of cultural and regional information and entertainment, and should contribute to the development of national unity and provide for a continuing expression of Canadian identity.

The mandate of the CRTC is to regulate and supervise all aspects of the Canadian broadcasting system (which includes CBC, educational and commercial radio and television broadcasting and cable). The system should be effectively owned and controlled by Canadians, so as to safe-guard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada, and it should be varied and comprehensive, and provide reasonable, balanced opportunity for the expression

McMurtry  
Hockey  
Inquiry  
(1974)

Néron Hockey  
Inquiry  
(1977)

CAB

The Broadcast-  
ing League  
(1930)

of different views on matters of public concern; and it should be of high standard using predominantly Canadian creative and other resources.

Within the past decade, the CBC has come under repeated heavy attack on a number of fronts. It has been criticized for poor management and internal discord; its programs have been accused of excessive sex, excessive violence, partisanship or lack of balance in news and public affairs. Its over-centralization and lack of regional input, its unresponsiveness to its public, its abandonment of radio music and drama to follow commercial-style programming have all been objects of criticism. Most recently, charges of lack of political balance, its partisanship, and failure to program for Canadian unity have been the most serious, and in 1977, the Prime Minister invited the CRTC to inquire into such charges, and advise whether a full-scale enquiry into broadcasting should now be undertaken. The CRTC is required to report back by July 1, 1977, the 110th anniversary of Canada's Confederation.

CRTC Inquiry  
(1977)

*Instant World*  
(1969-1971)

In 1969, the federal Department of Communications announced plans for a series of "telecommission" (or hardware) studies of the existing and future prospects of telecommunications in Canada. The topics of the studies, published in summary by the department in 1971 as *Instant World*, ranged from video discs, satellite transmission and fibre optics to the wired city.

In 1976, the department commissioned a study of the independent television production industry.

In 1976, the Minister of Communications announced that the licensing of pay-TV was "imminent" and "inevitable."

Early in 1977, the Broadcast Bureau of Measurement, the "ratings Bible" of Canada (which, with the Canadian branch of the A.C. Nielsen Company, carries out most Canadian broadcasting surveys), published its latest rating survey (February-March '77) for its subscribers. The survey showed that, after 25 years of Canadian television,

New  
Broadcasting  
Policy  
(1977)

in the Toronto area, in prime time, Canadians watch Canadian television only 18 per cent of the total time spent watching television; if one does not consider the broadcasts of the popular NHL hockey games, they are watching Canadian programming only 10.3 per cent of the time. The Toronto area is said to be the most competitive television market in the world, with more choice available than anywhere else. Even on a national basis, during prime-time hours when CBC programming has two-thirds Canadian content, only 42.5 per cent of Canadians watch; on the CTV network, only 21 per cent view Canadian programs.

It has taken just under 50 years for Canadian broadcasting to reach the point in its most populous market that the King and Bennett governments predicted with alarm, while they attempted to establish a "truly Canadian system."

In March of 1977, as this Report was being prepared for publication, the Minister of Communications announced a new Telecommunications Act, placing responsibility for broadcasting policy on the Minister of Communications and the Cabinet, with the requirement that instructions to the CRTC be tabled in Parliament within 20 days. While maintaining federal jurisdiction, for the first time the new Act provides a basis for participation by the provinces in broadcasting policy and operation.

So far as can be ascertained, there has been no Canadian study undertaken and no public debate on the future direction of Canadian television broadcasting. Nor, unlike the United States and every western European nation visited by the Commission, has there hitherto been a public inquiry into the impact of broadcast content on television audiences.

In 1970, the (Davey) Report of the Senate Committee on the Mass Media concluded:

We think the CRTC could expand its research more widely into the social implications of all phases of broad-



casting. This, after all is, or should be, the basis of all policy . . .

What are the effects on children of television violence generally, and of consumption-oriented children's programming? We are told by several organizations . . . that this information is urgently needed. No one is assembling it: we are left to the usual resort of importing American studies and hoping they will apply in Canada.

## Film

The Canadian film industry is very much a product of government encouragement and aid. Although two Canadian brothers (the Hollands) staged the first exhibition of Edison's Kinetoscope in New York just before the turn of the century, no private Canadian industry subsequently developed. Government departments themselves made such films as they required until 1914, when a Government Motion Picture Bureau was established. It produced films during World War I, but funds dried up during the Depression of the 1930s, and government financial assistance was not again given until 1939, when the government brought John Grierson from England to become government film commissioner and chairman of (NFB) the National Film Board. The board, reconstituted in 1950, is comprised of eight members appointed by the Cabinet, three being federal civil servants and five representing the public. Appointments are for three years. The NFB has distinguished itself over almost 40 years by its production of documentaries – the legacy of Grierson, who left in 1945 – and innovative programs such as *Challenge for Change*, which have spread Canadian images far and wide, with an estimated audience of more than a billion people. NFB films have earned more than 1,200 international prizes. From the time it absorbed the Motion Picture Bureau in 1941, the NFB has been responsible for production of all films required by federal government departments.

During the second World War, its *Canada Carries On* series reflected the Canadian experience. In 1942, the NFB set up a program of itinerant projectionists, to carry films on 30 rural circuits; this program resulted in widespread establishment of film councils and federations. By 1955, there were almost 500 film councils in Canada, representing some 12,000 organizations.

When the CBC began televising in 1952, it drew upon the NFB film libraries for material. While some NFB films still find exhibition on the CBC, that cooperation has diminished over the years. The impact of television was severely felt by film councils, and the day of the itinerant projectionist was over.

The NFB now distributes its products through Canada by a computerized service of cassettes for loan and rental for schools and organizations; its distribution for commercial cinema showings is handled by Columbia Pictures, a U.S. subsidiary. Film distribution abroad is brisk: Canadian embassies and trade missions and NFB offices circulate thousands of copies of NFB films, for both commercial and non-commercial use. NFB contributes substantially to favour world images of Canada. In 1963, the NFB began to make feature films, but announced in 1976 that it would make no more. Its normal production is about 125 films of all kinds each year. The NFB's contribution to Canadian life has been unique. It has a film library of thousands of its own titles; it conducts a workshop for training young writers and directors; and its technical research department has been an industry leader. The techniques of *Labyrinth*, at 1967's Expo, is only one example of this. The NFB produces films in two languages. It has been the training ground for many of the filmmakers now active in the private film industry. It has lately seen a great revival in animated films, and its stills division has produced superb books and exhibitions. While the NFB has nurtured Canadian filmmaking

National Film  
Board  
(1939)

and filmmakers, it also has so dominated the industry that the private sector has struggled against great odds.

Film Development Corporation  
(1967-1977)

In 1967, the federal government established a new body, the (CFDC) Canadian Film Development Corporation, to encourage and assist the private industry. The governing board consists of six members appointed for staggered five-year terms by the Cabinet, plus the government film commissioner. The Cabinet names the chairman from among the board's members. The CFDC's mandate is "to foster and promote the development of a feature film industry in Canada." It is empowered to invest in productions, to make loans, to give quality awards and grants to filmmakers and technicians, and to advise and assist in the distribution of such films. It was funded with \$10 million, for a 10-year period. At the end of seven years, it received a further \$10 million. Its mandate expires in 1977, and in anticipation, the Secretary of State commissioned the Tompkins Report to study and advise on film aid policy. The Report was prepared by a management consultant. It contains much important information, including comment on the paucity of statistics on the film industry. One of its main recommendations views films only as a business, not a cultural matter and approves assistance for "international films", rather than those produced for Canadian consumption, on the basis that for such a small market, films cannot be made profitably. It is anticipated that the new film policy will soon be announced. The CFDC usually provides 50 per cent, but sometimes up to 60 per cent, of production costs, including pre-production costs on acquiring scripts, et cetera, and it has rigorous qualifications on Canadian content, whether in a co-production or otherwise. (Agreements for co-production have been signed with the United Kingdom, Italy and France and negotiations are currently being conducted with West Germany). The CFDC requires proof of financing and

New Film Policy  
(1977)

distribution arrangements before investing.

It may also provide post-production assistance, this on a loan basis. The CFDC's investment policy of supporting overly commercial sexploitation and horror films has been widely attacked; against all experience of other national film industries, it prefers to fund imitation-American films, rather than those reflecting the Canadian experience to Canadians. It conducts itself more like a commercial banker than a body designed for cultural development, taking pride in the number of jobs it has stimulated in the Canadian creative community (a worthy enough achievement), but it is unwilling to use any yardstick for quality or artistic merit.

Because the film distribution system in Canada is dominated by branch plants of U.S. film-producing companies, the CFDC's policy thrusts Canadian producers into the arms of U.S. financiers who demand, and get, creative control. Canada is unique in that it lacks a production-distribution-exhibition system within national control, for not only is distribution in the hands of others, but exhibition as well.

Most Canadian cinemas belong to circuits (the four largest control 85 per cent of Canadian theatres). By far the largest are Famous Players – mostly owned by Paramount Pictures – and J. Arthur Rank's Odeon.

If a Canadian producer makes his film with financial assistance from a U.S. producer-distributor, it will be ensured some sort of distribution (but little promotion) in the cinema circuit that normally rents that distributor's films. If no such deal is involved, a Canadian film is difficult to place for exhibition. In 1973, the Secretary of State negotiated a voluntary film quota for Canadian films with the two largest chains, and in 1976 wrung from them a promise of investment in Canadian films.

Voluntary Film Quota  
(1973)

Impact of Television

The impact of television was not as severe in Canada as in Europe, if considered from the point of view of cinema closings; the number of cinemas

(including a large number of drive-ins) has remained fairly stable since the late 1940s, but the impact of television on audiences was the same in Canada as elsewhere: half stayed home for "free entertainment". There has been a gradual decline in audiences in each year since. It is thought now that audiences (mainly males between 17 and 24 years of age) are stabilizing, and may even rise somewhat.

Canadian feature-film production, including that of the NFB, has risen from three in 1960 to 45 in 1976, in two languages. Many of the better were only so "Canadian" as to attract tax support. Such films often list "co-producers" who have little control, and employ Canadian technical talent, a few Canadian actors in minor roles, and often expatriates of Canadian nationality.

Films made in French, very popular in Quebec, are not usually seen in English-speaking Canada; nor are Canadian English-language films seen in Quebec, which imports films in both French and English from France, the United States and elsewhere. Many American films shown in Quebec are neither subtitled or dubbed. Foreign, non-English films are usually shown in English Canadian art theatres with subtitles. By far the greatest number of films in Canadian distribution are U.S.-produced; Canada has become the number-one world market for U.S. films, representing some 15 per cent of total foreign film rentals. Hollywood, to the consternation of Canadians, considers Canada to be part of its domestic market. This became clear in 1976 when U.S. producers declined to submit films for Toronto's Festival of Festivals, on the grounds that it did not participate in "domestic" film festivals.

The federal government has given some tax relief for film investors: a fast write-off scheme that is designed to draw new investment. In addition, aid from various sources (including the military) is sometimes available to filmmakers.

Federal financial assistance helps

Canadian Film  
Institute  
(1935)

National Film  
Archives  
(1976)

Bassett Report  
(1973)

Quebec Film  
Act  
(1975)

support the Canadian Film Institute, a privately owned, non-profit organization founded in 1935 to encourage and promote the use of motion pictures and television in Canada. It is the parent organization to the National Film Library and the National Film Theatre. It produces some research and publishes an annual film yearbook. It also produces annually Canada's major film festival, and in 1976 hosted the world competition for animated films.

National Film Archives was established in 1976 as a division of Public Archives Canada, for the acquisition and conservation of film resources in the national interest. It coordinates archival collections of the National Film Board, the CBC, and films sponsored by the CFDC and the Canada Council and other federal agencies.

A recent feature has been the interest of several provinces in assisting the industry: Alberta and Saskatchewan invested in films in 1976, and Ontario provides marginal assistance from two uncoordinated departments (Tourism and Culture) for such things as assistance to Canadian film producers to help promote their films at Cannes, script prizes, encouragement to film companies to use Ontario locations, and assistance in their transportation. It is estimated that some 20 films have been shot recently in Ontario, including *Network*, *Equus*, and *Silver Streak*. Film writers are also assisted by grants from the Ontario Arts Council, as were two film festivals in 1976, the International Animation Festival in Ottawa, and the Festival of Festivals in Toronto. In addition, an Ontario Film Institute has been established at the Ontario Science Centre.

In 1973, the Ontario Ministry of Industry and Tourism commissioned a report by John F. Bassett, which underlined the cultural importance of a Canadian film industry. It dealt with establishment of film quotas and a fund to be derived from a levy on box-office receipts.

In 1975, Quebec passed a Law Con-

cerning Cinema, to organize the Quebec film industry. The Act created a centralized provincial body, *Direction Générale du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel*, and a private organization, *l'Institut du Cinéma Québécois*. The budget envisioned was \$4 million. While the Act is on the statute books, no funds have been appropriated, nor have the institutions been staffed. The Quebec film industry is in the doldrums.

Canadian-made films must not contravene the general criminal laws of the country, in particular sections prohibiting obscenity and incitement of race hatred. The 1959 Criminal Code amendment defines as obscene: "any publication, a dominant characteristic of which is the undue exploitation of sex, or of sex in any one or more of the following subjects, namely, crime, horror, cruelty and violence." The section deals with written matter and with film, making it a crime to disseminate obscene matter, or to present "an immoral, indecent or obscene performance, entertainment or representation." In a series of cases decided in the Supreme Court of Canada (1962), Ontario's Supreme Court (1971) and Manitoba's Supreme Court (1974), judicial opinion was expressed that one must look into the purpose of the producer, the artistic merit of the work, and community standards of tolerance (the national community) before declaring a work obscene. The Federal Law Reform Commission has recommended that such limitations be confined to prohibition of communicating such material to children, to damming up the flood of advertising and public display of obscene material; and to rating – not prohibiting – films according to age groups, to assist in informing the public in choosing its entertainment.

The Customs Tariff Act empowers its officers to seize, destroy, or otherwise deal with imported goods: "books, printed paper, drawings, paintings, prints, photographs or representations of any kind of a treasonable or seditious or of an immoral or indecent character." In the spring of 1977 a U.S.

magazine was seized at the border and permitted to circulate only after a dozen or more pages depicting oral sex were excised.

Eight of the ten Canadian provinces have enacted legislation constituting boards of film censors or classifiers; Newfoundland and P.E.I. accept other provinces' classifications, although none legislate respecting the legitimate theatre or the record industry. Passage by a provincial board does not act as a defence in prosecution on obscenity charges, although it can be persuasive. Local authorities are free to prosecute obscenity charges.

There is a remarkable similarity among the age classifications, although they are not quite standard. Most censor in some way, by cutting or rejecting films. Both Nova Scotia and Manitoba have special provisions regarding films to be shown in drive-in cinemas. The Manitoba Amusement Act has recently (1972) been amended to withdraw the power to cut sequences or scenes or to reject films outright. There is provision for appeal. The Manitoba Classification Board's responsibility extends to advertisements for films.

Ontario was one of the first jurisdictions ever to censor films. In March, 1911 it enacted the Theatres and Cinematographs Act. (On the same day, Quebec and Manitoba passed similar legislation.) The directions to the first board were that "no matter of an immoral or obscene nature, or depicting a crime or reproducing a prizefight shall be exhibited." A three-man board was named, and a right of appeal provided for. The Act was amended several times, with no substantial change. In 1921, the Censor Board published its criteria. A new Theatres Act was established under legislation of 1953, amended in 1963 and 1975. The Ontario Board of Censors, consisting of six members, including the director and a vice-chairman, is part of the Theatres Branch of the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations. It is also responsible for approving cinema construction for fire safety, and

Local  
Authority

Ontario Film  
Censorship  
(1911)



for licensing cinemas and film projectionists. A fee is charged for cutting, rejecting and classifying films and approving cinema and newspaper advertising. Classifications are:

General – suitable for all ages

Adult Entertainment – a recommendation for parental guidance

Restricted – no one under 18 to be admitted.

No Appeal

Ontario's legislation does not provide an appeal procedure for dissatisfied producers or distributors. In 1974, only eight films out of 930 submitted (including 16mm) were rejected; 165 were classified for general exhibition, 321 as adult entertainment and 332 as restricted. There were 134 requests for cuts. The 1975 figures were 852 feature films submitted, seven rejected and 12 still pending, 168 classified general, 326 adult and 339 restricted. A total of 166 cuts were requested. The figures for 1976 were 822 features submitted, three not approved and 11 still pending; 137 were classified general, 315 adult and 356 restricted; cuts were requested in 175 films.

The Ontario Censor Board follows its own written set of guidelines, primarily concerned with sexual matters. That is not so surprising, because the industry relies upon the board's classifications to keep out of trouble under the Criminal Code's obscenity provision, which deals with sex, and only with violence as sex-and-violence. Ontario's posture in the field of film censorship is very important, because some 40 per cent of Canadian film box-office receipts are annually generated in Ontario, and Toronto is one of the most avidly movie-going cities in the world.

New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have classifications similar to those of Ontario. British Columbia's legislation is similar, except that those under 18 may be admitted to restricted films when accompanied by an adult. Quebec has three similar classifications, except that the middle classification prohibits admission for anyone under

14, not leaving admission to parental guidance alone. Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba each have four classifications: a general or family entertainment class; a class restricted to those over 18; a class where anyone under 18 (16 in Alberta) must be accompanied by an adult; and a class for mature or adult audiences, advising parental guidance. Qualifications for board members are not laid down.

In 1975, an attack was made on the Nova Scotia Censor Board's rejection of *Last Tango in Paris*. The attack was successful: the Nova Scotia Supreme Court held that such censorship was directed at obscene and immoral exhibitions, which are matters of criminal law within the jurisdiction of the federal Parliament. The case, *McNeil v. The Queen*, is, at the time of this writing, under appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. If it is upheld, there will be no constitutional authority for adult censorship within provincial jurisdiction.

## The Press

Although there is a strong tradition of free speech, there is no constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression in Canada. The 1960 Bill of Rights, a federal statute, recognizes freedom of speech and freedom of the press, but courts have found the statute deficient.

While the 1968 Broadcasting Act concedes that the right of freedom of expression (in broadcasting) is unquestioned, there is no similar press law in either provincial or federal legislation. In 1944, newspaper editors and the Canadian Daily Newspaper Association appointed a Freedom of the Press Commission, to secure an amendment to the British North America Act (Canada's Constitution), which would guarantee press freedom. The government of the day declined to act. No public right of reply exists, nor does the law protect a journalist's asserted right to conceal sources. The provinces enact laws against libel and slander, and the federal Criminal Code con-

Statutory  
Recognition of  
Freedom of the  
Press  
(1960)

Freedom of  
Broadcast  
Expression  
(1968)

Press Freedom  
Commission  
(1944)

tains provisions against obscenity (which only includes violence in connection with sex) and hate literature. Treason, sedition, breach of official secrets and of defence regulations and contempt of court are all prohibited. There is also federal statutory provision for seizure of imports by the Customs and Excise Branch of the Department of National Revenue. There has never been a twentieth century instance in which the federal government attempted prior restraint on the domestic press (except in wartime or times of national emergency); but at least two provinces, Quebec and Alberta, have, in the past, enacted laws circumscribing freedom of expression. The courts struck down the Alberta Press Law in 1938 and the notorious Quebec Padlock Law in 1957.

Daily newspapers are published in most Canadian cities. There are 144 dailies, of which 45 are published in Ontario. Only a few cities have more than one daily; a few have two; Montreal has six (four in French, two in English); Toronto has four (three in English and one in Italian); Ottawa has three (two in English and one in French); and Quebec City has three (French) newspapers. The circulation of *The Toronto Star* is the largest; Toronto's *Globe and Mail* is the only one which might be said to have some national and even international circulation. There are 1,013 weekly Canadian newspapers, of which fewer than 300 are published in Ontario, in many languages as well as English and French. Daily and weekly (or community) newspapers have their own associations. There are very few mass readership magazines in either English or French.

In 1960, a federal inquiry into the state of magazines was commissioned. The commission (chaired by Gratton O'Leary, a distinguished journalist) conducted public hearings in six provinces, and received 188 briefs and 200 letters. Among the recommendations of the Report, issued in 1961, were:

That a deduction from income by a

taxpayer of expenditures incurred for advertising directed at the Canadian market in a foreign periodical wherever printed, be disallowed; That a nation's communications media must be aware of their responsibilities and that such media should not be used merely for the re-publication of editorial matter to support an advertising structure.

In 1976, after long parliamentary and public debate, federal legislation was enacted that withdrew advertising in non-Canadian magazines (notably *Time*, which thereupon ceased to publish in Canada) as an income-tax deduction, and that established criteria for defining a "Canadian" magazine.

Newspaper and magazine ownership is concentrated in large groups, and the problem of concentration of ownership led to the study of the mass media (principally newspapers) by a special Senate Committee chaired by Senator Keith Davey. Among the recommendations of its 1970 Report were more professional training for journalists and the establishment by the industry of a voluntary National Press Council. The report also advocated establishment of community press councils, along the model described by the (then) editor of *The Washington Post*. These recommendations were not followed by the creation of a national press body; however, there are now province-wide councils in each of Alberta, Quebec and Ontario, and a community council in Windsor, Ontario, established at the behest of *The Windsor Star*.

The Quebec Press Council, established in 1972, after a provincial enquiry into press freedom, includes all media, print and broadcast, dailies and weeklies, management and journalists. Its board is made up of six members from media management, six journalists, six representatives of the public, and the president, who is elected by the other 18 members. It has drawn up a code of ethics and issued professional journalists' cards, and it has a standing committee on complaints. An inde-

(Davey) Senate  
Study of Mass  
Media  
(1969-70)

Quebec Press  
Council  
(1972)

O'Leary  
Commission  
(1960-61)

Alberta Press  
Council  
(1972)

Ontario Press  
Council  
(1972)

Windsor  
Community  
Press Council  
(1971)

pendent Foundation for the Press Council receives grants and gifts to permit the council financing independent of media or government.

Alberta's Press Council, constituted in 1972, includes some print members of the media, plus lay members, and is chaired by the president emeritus of the University of Alberta.

Ontario's Press Council, like that of Alberta, does not represent all of the print media. Two of Toronto's daily newspapers are not members. There are 21 members; the chairman is nominated by the newspaper membership, together with 10 news representatives and 10 who represent the public. Members are elected for two-year terms, on a basis whereby half are elected each year. Hearings are usually conducted in private. A complainant must first apply to the appropriate newspaper, and must sign a waiver of suit before the complaint will be heard. By its constitution, all those who become members undertake to print the council's dispositions, and to finance the council according to their newspaper circulation.

The Windsor Community Press Council was established in 1971, at the prompting of *The Windsor Star*, which is itself a member of the Ontario Press Council. Its board is comprised of 15 members, the chairman (now a Provincial Court judge), two representatives of the *Star*, and 12 members from the public.

Canadian newspapers generally provide pages for letters to the editor, for public access. *The Toronto Star* provides the services of a distinguished senior staffer as "Your Man at *The Star*" to receive complaints and vent criticisms of *The Star's* actions and policies – although he does not appear to have all the trappings of independence of his opposite number at *The Washington Post*.

While newspaper circulation is up, it is not keeping pace with the growth of the population, and readership is down somewhat.

The Canadian Daily Newspaper

Publishers' Association adopted a seven-point statement in 1977. It covers press ethics, freedom of the press, responsibility, accuracy and fairness, independence, privacy and access.

During World War II, the War Exchange Conservation Act prohibited the import of non-essential items, including comic books. That saw the beginning of an indigenous Canadian industry. The famous Canadian "whites" were produced during this period. After the war, the ban was lifted and the Canadian comic industry died, unable to compete with the multi-coloured American product.

Crime and  
Horror Comics

Concern that gripped the United States and Europe over the impact of crime and horror comics on children did not pass Canada by: in 1949, federal legislation against them was enacted and remains on the statute books. In 1955, the Criminal Code section forbidding sale, distribution or publication of crime comics was redefined as "any material filled wholly or substantially with pictures of actual crimes or events connected with crimes, whether events occurred before or after, whether real or fictitious."

In 1975, an attempt was made by Richard Comely of Winnipeg to revive the industry. He began to publish, as Comely Comix, a *Captain Canuck* comic. He has had initial success, even in the U.S. market, and indicates that his prime concern is with producing a Canadian comic that can compete, without resorting to an over-emphasis on violence.

The Canadian book-publishing industry has very frequently been in financial trouble, faced with heavy competition from imported books and U.S.-owned publishing and book distribution interests in Canada. In 1970, a study was undertaken by the Ontario government's Royal Commission on Book Publishing chaired by Richard Rohmer. Following the Report, the Book Publishers' Council was created, and government aid given to the industry.

In *The Messenger's Motives: Ethical*

Rohmer Royal  
Commission  
(1970-72)

Aid to  
Book  
Publishing

*Problems of the News Media*, John L. Hulteng quotes Canadian William Heine:

North American's print media are unwise to continue indefinitely as the only major elements of democratic society from whose decisions there is no appeal.

- a President can be impeached
- a Prime Minister can be defeated in parliament
- lawyers can be disbarred
- doctors can be denied the right to practise
- labour union leaders can be voted out by members and controlled by law
- corporate officers can be removed by boards of directors
- corporations can be reconstituted by law, specifically by trust law.

The list is endless, and includes broadcast outlets, which can lose their licence by decisions of regulatory boards in both Canada and the United States.

The print media, however, by common law, tradition and precedent in Canada, and by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, are answerable to no one – and certainly not to any legislative body, for unethical and improper conduct. It can be argued that the reader, by his impact on circulation, is the ultimate control over the print media. That argument is invalidated by the reality that most North American cities have one newspaper, which is almost incapable of going out of business and unlikely to be driven out of business.



# Research Institutes and Organizations

The following is a sample list of institutes and organizations conducting mass media research. There are many additional centres of expertise in departments of journalism, psychology and sociology at universities and within major broadcasting organizations in these and other countries.

## **Austria**

Universität Salzburg  
Institut für Publizistik und Kommunikations-  
theorie  
Salzburg

Universität Wien  
Institut für Publizistik  
Vienna

## **Australia**

Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education  
Rockhampton  
Queensland

LaTrobe University  
Centre for the Study of Educational  
Communication and Media  
Victoria

## **Belgium**

Catholic University of Louvain  
Department of Social Communication  
Louvain

Commission of the European Communities  
Brussels

Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven  
Centrum voor Communicatie Wetenschappen  
Louvain

Université Libre de Bruxelles  
Institut de Sociologie Solvay  
Centre d'étude des techniques de diffusion  
collective  
Brussels

## **Brazil**

Cicade Universitária  
Escola de Comunicações y Artes  
São Paulo

## **Canada**

Canadian Communications Research  
Information Centre  
Ottawa, Ontario

Carleton University  
School of Journalism  
Ottawa, Ontario

Concordia University  
Department of Communication Arts  
Montreal, Quebec

McGill University  
Interdisciplinary Program in Communications  
Montreal, Quebec

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education  
Toronto, Ontario

Simon Fraser University  
Department of Communication Studies  
Vancouver, British Columbia

Université de Montréal  
Section de Communication  
Département de Psychologie  
Montréal, Québec

Université Laval  
Journalisme et Information  
Québec, Québec

University of Western Ontario  
School of Journalism  
London, Ontario

University of Windsor  
The Centre for Canadian Communication Studies  
Windsor, Ontario

#### **Denmark**

Aarhus Universitet  
Institut for Presseforskning  
Aarhus

Media-Forsk  
Aarhus

Nordicom Statsbiblioteket  
Aarhus

Nordisk Institut  
Aarhus

#### **Egypt**

Cairo University  
Faculty of Mass Communication  
Ciza

#### **Finland**

University of Helsinki  
Institute of Mass Communication  
Helsinki

University of Tampere  
Institute of Journalism and Mass Communication  
Tampere

#### **France**

Centre d'études de communications de masse  
Paris

Institut français de presse et de sciences de  
l'information

Centre national de la recherche scientifique  
Paris

Institut national de l'audio-visuel  
Paris

Université de Paris  
Département audio-visuel

#### **Germany (East)**

Staatliches Komitee für Fernsehen  
Beim Ministerrat der DDR  
Berlin

Zentral Institut für Jugendforschung  
Leipzig

#### **Germany (West)**

Arbeitsgemeinschaft für  
Kommunikationsforschung  
Munich

Catholic Media Council  
Aachen

Deutsche Studiengesellschaft für Publizistik  
Stuttgart

Freie Universität Berlin  
Institut für Publizistik  
Berlin

Herausgeber der Publizistik  
Göttingen

Institut für Zeitungsforschung  
Dortmund

Internationales Zentralinstitut für das  
Jugend und Bildungsfernsehen  
Munich

Johannes Gutenberg Universität  
Institut für Publizistik  
Mainz

Media Perspektiven  
Frankfurt

Paedagogische Hochschule Niedersachsen  
Hildesheim

University of Cologne  
Research Section on Mass Communications  
Institute of Sociology  
Cologne

Universität Münster  
Institut für Publizistik  
Münster

University of Nuremberg  
Institute for Political and Communications  
Sciences  
Nuremberg

Universität Stuttgart  
Institut für Literaturwissenschaft  
Stuttgart

### **Hungary**

Tömegkommunikációs Kutató Központ  
Budapest

### **India**

Bangalore University  
Department of Communication  
Bangalore  
Eastern India Centre for Mass Communication  
Studies  
Calcutta

### **Iran**

College of Mass Communications  
Tehran

### **Italy**

Centre of the Sociology of Mass Communications  
University of Rome  
Rome

Centro Nazionale Italiano per gli studi  
sull'informazione  
Rome

Citta Universitaria  
Istituto Italiano de Publicismo  
Rome

### **Japan**

Communication Design Institute  
Tokyo  
Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors  
Association  
Tokyo  
National Association of Broadcasters  
Tokyo  
Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) Radio and  
Television  
Culture Research Institute  
Tokyo  
University of Tokyo  
Institute of Journalism  
Tokyo

### **Lebanon**

American University of Beirut  
Mass Communication Program  
Beirut

University of Lebanon  
Institute of Journalism and Mass  
Communications  
Beirut

### **Netherlands**

Free University  
Department of Communications  
Amsterdam  
Institute for Mass Communication  
Catholic University  
Nijmegen  
Universiteit van Amsterdam  
Vakgroep Massacommunicatie  
Amsterdam  
University of Utrecht  
Department of Mass Communications  
Utrecht

### **Nigeria**

University of Lagos  
Department of Mass Communications  
Lagos

### **Norway**

Nordic Documentation Centre for Mass  
Communication Research  
Institute of Sociology  
University of Bergen  
Bergen  
University of Oslo  
Institute for Mass Communications Research  
Oslo

### **Poland**

Ośrodek Badań Prasoznawczych  
Cracow  
RSW Prasa Książka-Ruch  
Warsaw  
Ośrodek Badań Opinii Publicznej i Studiów  
Programowych  
Warsaw

**Singapore**

Asian Mass Communication Research and  
Information Centre  
Singapore

**Spain**

Consejo Nacional de la Prensa  
Madrid

Ciudad Universitaria  
Facultad de Ciencias de la Información  
Madrid

Universidad de Barcelona  
Facultad de Ciencias de la Información  
Barcelona

Universidad de Navarra  
Facultad de Ciencias de la Información  
Pamplona

**Sweden**

Economic Research Institute  
Stockholm

Institute of Political Science  
Communication Research Group  
Göteborg

University of Lund  
Sociology Institute  
Lund

**Switzerland**

Institute for Journalism and Mass  
Communications  
Fribourg

**United Kingdom**

Centre for Advanced Television Studies  
London

National Foundation for Education Research in  
England and Wales  
Slough

University of Leeds  
Centre for Television Research  
Leeds

University of Leicester  
Centre for Mass Communication Research  
Leicester

World Association of Christian Communication  
London

**United States**

Aspen Institute  
Palo Alto, California

East-West Communications Institute  
Honolulu, Hawaii

Harvard University  
Center for Research in Children's Television  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Indiana University  
Bureau of Media Research  
Bloomington, Indiana

Michigan State University  
Department of Communications  
East Lansing, Michigan

Rand Corporation  
Santa Monica, California

Stanford University  
Department of Communication Studies  
Stanford, California

Syracuse University  
Communications Research Center  
Newhouse School of Public Communications  
Syracuse, New York

Temple University  
School of Communications and Theater  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

University of California, Berkeley,  
Mass Communications Project  
Graduate School of Public Policy  
Berkeley, California

University of California, Los Angeles  
Law Communication Center  
Los Angeles, California

University of Illinois  
Institute of Communications Research  
Champaign, Illinois

University of Michigan  
Interdepartmental Program in Mass  
Communication  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



University of Pennsylvania  
Annenberg School of Communication  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

University of Southern California  
Center for Communications Policy Research  
Annenberg School of Communications  
Los Angeles, California

University of Washington  
School of Communications  
Seattle, Washington

University of Wisconsin  
Mass Communications Research Center  
Madison, Wisconsin

**USSR**

Soviet Academy of Science  
Institute for Social Research  
Moscow

**Venezuela**

Instituto de Investigaciones de la Comunicación  
Caracas

# Chronology of Some Research Studies and Policy Developments Related to the Communications Industry 1947-1977

## **1947 U.K.**

Royal Commission on the Press appointed.

## **U.S.**

Commission on Freedom of the Press reports.

## **1949 Canada**

Criminal Code amendment on crime comics is passed.

## **France**

Youth Protection Act against crime and horror comics is passed.

## **1951 Canada**

(Massey) Royal Commission on the Arts reports.

## **1953 U.K.**

British Press Council is established.

## **West Germany**

Youth Protection Act against crime and horror comics is passed.

## **1954 U.S.**

Senate Committee on the Judiciary, (Kefauver) Subcommittee to investigate Juvenile Delinquency reports.

## **1955 U.K.**

Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act against crime and horror comics is passed.

## **1956 West Germany**

Press Council is established.

## **1957 Canada**

(Fowler) Royal Commission on Broadcasting reports.

## **1959 Italy**

Statutory Press Council is established.

## **U.K.**

Obscene Publications Act is passed.

## **1960 U.K.**

BBC adopts Violence Code.

## **1961 Austria**

Press Council is established.

## **Canada**

(O'Leary) Royal Commission on Publications reports.

## **U.K.**

Home Secretary sponsors Conference on Juvenile Delinquency.

## **1962 U.K.**

Home Secretary sponsors second Conference on Juvenile Delinquency.

## **1963 U.K.**

Television Research Committee is appointed by the Home Secretary.

## **1964 Denmark**

Statutory Press Council is established.

## **Sweden**

Film Censorship Committee's report is published.

**1964 U.K.**

Independent Television Authority (ITA) adopts a code on violence.

**U.S.**

Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) publishes *A Review and Evaluation of Recent Studies on the Impact of Violence*.

**1965 Canada**

(Fowler) Committee on Broadcasting reports.

**U.S.**

Senate Committee on the Judiciary, (Dodd) Subcommittee to investigate Juvenile Delinquency reports.

**1966 U.K.**

Television Research Committee publishes first progress report, *Problems of Television Research*.

**West Germany**

Magazine Council is established.

**Denmark**

Study of obscenity and pornography is published.

**Denmark**

Commission on film censorship reports.

**1967 U.S.**

Carnegie Commission on educational television reports.

**West Germany**

Commission on concentration of ownership of the press, broadcasting and film reports.

**1968 Italy**

Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI) study on violence in television is published.

**U.S.**

(Kerner) National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders reports.

**U.S.**

Motion Picture Association of America establishes new Film Code.

**1969 Denmark**

Adult film censorship is abandoned.

**Sweden**

Survey of Scandinavian research on television is published by the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation (SR).

**U.K.**

Television Research Committee publishes *Second Progress Report and Recommendations*.

**U.S.**

(Eisenhower) National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence reports.

**U.S.**

Surgeon General establishes a Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior which commissions research on the effects of television violence.

**1970 Canada**

(Davey) Senate Committee on the Mass Media reports.

**UNESCO**

Symposium on Violence in the Media is held.

**1971 U.K.**

ITA publishes revised Violence Code.

**U.S.**

(Sloan) Commission on Cable Communications reports.

**West Germany**

Second German Television (ZDF) network publishes survey of the literature on television violence.

**1972 Canada**

Press councils are established in Ontario and Alberta.

**Canada (Ontario)**

(Rohmer) Royal Commission on Book Publishing reports.

**Switzerland**

Télévision Suisse Romande publishes *Rapport sur violence et liberté de mœurs à la télévision*.

**1972 U.K.**

BBC publishes *The Portrayal of Violence in*

*Television Programmes: A Note of Guidance and Violence on Television.*

**U.S.**

Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior reports.

**West Germany**

West German Broadcasting (WDR) sponsors Symposium on Violence in Television.

**1973 Canada**

Quebec Press Council formed.

**Council of Europe**

Symposium on Freedom of Expression and the Role of the Artist is held.

**U.K.**

*The Portrayal of Violence on Television: Working Party Interim Report* is published by the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA, formerly ITA).

**U.S.**

National News Council is established.

**1974 Austria**

Austrian Broadcasting (ORF) publishes research on violence and television.

**1974 Canada (Ontario)**

(Bassett) Committee on the Film Industry reports.

**Canada (Ontario)**

(McMurtry) *Investigation and Inquiry into Violence in Amateur Hockey* is published.

**Council of Europe**

Symposium on the Role of Management and Telecommunications in a Democratic Society is held.

**U.S.**

(Pastore) Communications Subcommittee of the Senate Commerce Committee holds hearings.

**1975 Canada**

Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) sponsors Symposium on Television Violence.

**U.K.**

*The Portrayal of Violence on Television: Working Party Second Interim Report* is published by IBA.

**U.S.**

CBS publishes studies on the effects of certain television programs on children.

**1976 Austria**

New media law is passed.

**Switzerland**

Press Council is established.

**U.K.**

White Paper on the Future of the British Film Industry is tabled.

**U.S.**

ABC publishes *Studies on Violence and Television*.

**U.S.**

New copyright act is adopted.

**U.S.**

(Van Deerlin) House of Representatives Communications Subcommittee holds hearings.

**West Germany**

Penal Code amendment against incitement to violence is passed.

**1977 Canada**

New Telecommunications Act is tabled.

**Canada**

Senate announces study on factors leading to juvenile delinquency.

**Canada (Ontario)**

Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry reports.

**Denmark**

Study on establishing a broadcast archive is published.

**France**

Commission on Violence in the News Media is to report.

**France**

President's Committee on Violence is to report.



**Sweden**

Broadcasting Committee reports.

**U.K.**

(Annan) Committee on Broadcasting reports.

**U.K.**

Royal Commission on the Press is to report.

**U.S.**

Revision of 1934 Communications Act is undertaken.















